DATA POINT

Numbers are a human invention, a figment of our imagination, a product of our mind but not of any material world.

The essence of material-nature is not mathematics.

Though numbers seem to enable great precision and simulation, there aren't any mathematical models that can overlay precisely, even a basic natural element, since all tangible things, when examined closely, are actually unique.

An artist with paint and canvas can produce beautifully accurate facsimiles of what they have in mind but we don't assume nature is composed of pigment and paper.

Mathematics has been used to invent systems of economics, conjuring enormous wealth and power for just a fortunate few; so if mathematics can claim to be an essence of anything then it is bondage, slavery of a human population forced to comply with a cruel system of financial accountability; but alas nothing else.

-- A Circular Delusion by Rachel Jales

We are unlikely to convince those who's livelihoods

depend on the manipulation of numbers, that though their blueprints work within the constraints of manufacturing, over here in the organic realm, mathematical theories simply don't behave, are ten-a-penny, endlessly appearing and disappearing, requiring continuous reinvention.

Those who have depended on the use of numbers, statistics and that old chestnut 'probability' in the belief that greater or smaller quantities of something, will eventually allow them to wield more control, have been responsible for the destruction, misery and mass deaths of many species.

Subtracting, adding, multiplying and dividing are quick fixes for a misconception: the belief that nature is in need of a solution.

The concepts of 'problem' and 'solution' don't exist in the realm of nature, since these things, after all, are just natural processes.

-- Rachel Jales, December 24th 2003, (interview).

Modern 'Governance' also known as 'control' depends on harvesting digital signals that are emitted when each

of us interacts with compulsory human systems that quantify our behaviour.

A procedure known as ‘parsing’ sifts through ever growing mountains of values, discarding ‘noise’ to generate interesting patterns known as ‘Predictive Behaviour’; in an effort to bury those judicial pests ‘coincidence’ and ‘circumstantial’ under more concrete sounding terminology; most recent of which is designed to perfectly slot into a new vocabulary for virtual mechanisms of contemporary analysis:

Data Point

CHAPTER 1

2008 January 12, Saturday.

22:00

Closed half an hour ago, a damp roadside service station car park reflects light from a few aged lamp posts.

Empty but for a single parked vehicle, a man leans against it staring up at a cloudless winter night sky,

watching its blanket of flickering stars through binoculars.

In darkness, foliage is rustled by a gentle breeze which carries with it wretched odours of urine and diesel from a nearby overnight truck stop.

Astronomy offers a momentary distraction from this person’s routine, whereby, during a few wakeful hours, he attempts to build a Self Employed business and at night looks for somewhere to safely park and sleep; a chilly existence, brought about by a stubborn determination to succeed, an ambition which by all reckoning, years ago capsized.

Once vagrant, always.

Homelessness and harassment go hand in hand, since every cubic millimetre capable of occupancy is already privately owned so sleeping for free unmolested is unlikely; and there are many UK predators, all human and those whom we may look to for protection, those with powers of arrest, more often than not, take a dim view of anyone not in possession of their own front door key.

DATA POINT

Here and now; this man's life, like a cogged, clockwork machine running on rails, is about to become a runaway train, losing any semblance of control, cascading beyond believability and the comprehension of ordinary societal sheep.

Propelled by a stinking wind, bouncing plastic coffee cup lids rattle on tarmac, while lorries and cars rumble past over a nearby dual carriage way.

A distant police helicopter circles, wings throbbing, lights flashing, occasionally scanning below with a powerful beam; an aircraft that wants to be noticed, yet this astronomer shows no interest, leaning back against his car and observing the sky directly above.

Then, as if a huge fish suddenly obstructs sunlight from reaching a submerged observer, a great opaque silhouette glides silently overhead, causing black where once there were stars.

Confused, he naturally follows the thing with his glasses, driven by a feeling of urgent discovery that forces him to keep sight of whatever it is; as featureless as a cardboard cut out, it is probably another helicopter but very different from the noisy one, way over there.

It stops, it hovers.

A rush of oops-panic scrambles his mind and his homeless-instinct of trespass-guilt causes him to wonder: who’s watching who?

Quickly getting into his car, he shuts himself away; all exterior noise extinguished, just a whooshing throb of his circulatory system filling his ears.

Through semicircular wiper gaps of a dirty window screen, he stares into glistening darkness and attempts to remain motionless, slowing his exhales hoping to hide his foggy, frozen breath.

Cold toes and cold fingers.

The weight of an ever present debt of overdue sleep clouds his thoughts and his bloodshot eyes blink slowly, but just as unconsciousness is about to get a grip, a thunderous helicopter-made tornado rattles the world around him, his fight or flight instincts, pathetically worthless.

Glancing up through his vibrating car’s sunroof, the

underbelly of something hanging a few metres above can be seen, its only illumination reflected from candle strength dilapidated lampposts.

A vortex of dust and debris spins around him as the aircraft ascends out of view, while a clank and clatter percussion of various discarded drink containers play out its departure.

Cold.

Blood pressure and his own internal fatigue-monster, rob him of an ability to fathom any implications that may arise from this latest transgression; and he’s out.

CHAPTER 2

2008 January 13, Sunday.

04:30

Frost.

A mobile telephone makes a series of vibrations and loud chimes; it’s time to leave before service station staff arrive.

DATA POINT

Experience has left him wary of people who vandalise vehicles that are caught using their car parks as overnight places of refuge.

Cheap, foreign, service station labour, who themselves have personal experience of not knowing where they might sleep, are eager to quietly twist screws into sleeping travellers' tyres.

Shivering.

A cold engine rattles into life and an amber display reads: minus six degrees Celsius.

From a half litre plastic bottle he forces cold water down his throat, while window wipers scrape at ice, creating thin semicircular tracks.

Car lights on, a muddy grass verge is lit and small mammals scramble left and right.

He puts his vehicle into gear and like those scattering creatures, slips away from this god forsaken frozen squat, until next time.

DATA POINT

A few hours still need to be killed before access is allowed into his makeshift office: a workshop (Self Storage Unit) with electricity.

During the week these early hours can be absorbed by driving to a twenty four hour supermarket car park where he can hide in plain sight amongst crowds of other parked vehicles and perhaps doze for thirty minutes; today however is a Sunday and even so called ‘twenty four hour’ shops will not open until at least ten o’clock but under the circumstances sitting still in an empty, well lit car park without harassment is as good as it gets.

After an uneventful hour’s journey, he pulls up under a bright lamp post of a large and almost empty supermarket parking area.

Wagtails, like tiny grey cap wearing people march back and forth pecking at the frozen tarmac; and without boots or socks, these feathered fellows seem oblivious to this frosty weather.

Peaceful to watch, he blinks slowly.

CHAPTER 3

2008 January 13, Sunday.

06:30

Reed Clarke.

At an entrance gate of a self storage facility, a tired homeless man extends an arm through his car door window and taps out an access code causing a barricade to slowly slide open bouncing on metallic wheels and closing automatically a few seconds later.

Dusty concrete floors with an air of damp mildew characterise these premises as nothing more than a cold industrial building where people are expected to visit infrequently.

A long corridor, his footsteps echo and strip lights zap into operation as he approaches.

Releasing his storage unit’s padlock, Reed pulls and pushes a large metal roller door up and over and steps inside, before yanking it back down again with an ear splitting cacophony of metallic racket.

Safe.

Shards of light from powerful external lamps peak through poorly fitted walls, making glitter of dust descending.

Against the left wall is shelving stacked with plastic boxes that are filled with books, bits, dry food and a microwave oven which sits on a shelf of its own, whilst bottled water and a suitcase, jammed with clean clothes, stand neatly arranged underneath.

Three computer screens that date from various technological ages sit on top of a self assembly desk along with a computer keyboard, a mouse, a desk lamp and god knows what that other stuff is.

More e-waste has been cobbled together to create a humming collection of GNU/Linux computers that are caseless, their gubbins exposed and placed inside a sturdy, purpose built metal rack.

Freezing in winter and roasting in summer, this relatively inexpensive metal makeshift office provides free electricity, toilet facilities and somewhere to sit for a few

daytime hours, away from people.

A constant invisible fallout of mysterious detritus captured by this building’s flat roof is distributed through its many cracks and cavities by turbulent weather; so using a camera lens puffer, a damp cloth, a watercolour paintbrush and a vacuum cleaner, his morning office clean up ritual begins.

Tapping computer keyboards upside down loosens large buried fragments, the puffer dislodging smaller particles and with a cloth Reed wipes screens and surfaces.

Exposed computer motherboards facilitate removal of dust using the puffer and bristles of a paintbrush.

Finally floor and ceiling, where all edges and corners are vacuumed.

Now to himself.

He has become adept at crouching inside a large plastic box and pouring warm water over his head with a cup; shampoo turns out to be very useful for washing both hair and body since it rinses away with less effort than a bar of soap.

Another trick is to use a small towel which can be dried after use by placing it on top of an old CRT computer monitor, one of those big beige boxy things that generate a lot of heat.

Be quick about it however, it is still very cold.

Clean clothes from the suitcase, dirty clothes in a black sports bag.

Jobs done, time to put the kettle on and have his usual for breakfast: porridge and tea.

Mug held in both hands he savours a mouthful of hot beverage while waiting for a microwave ping.

Then at his desk where a small heater blows full pelt, fingers buzz across keyboard keys, unlocking a lightweight GNU/Linux desktop which spans three monitors.

From right to left, a CRT has an email client and a stack of command line prompts, one or two running chat sessions; centre is a software development environment and occupying the left screen is a many-

tabbed web browser.

To remind himself of where he left off yesterday he clicks *Run* on his development environment whilst flipping through some hand written notes.

His software application starts and live video feeds fade into focus.

From Firefox, he clicks refresh, causing identical feeds to appear there also, with the addition of textual information.

For a while he navigates recorded video, occasionally writing notes and software instructions but as always the sleep monster looms.

Because it is against Storage Facility rules for him to sleep in this makeshift office, his only option is to leave, park, sleep for an hour and then come back; so once again off he goes.

CHAPTER 4

2008 January 13, Sunday.

DATA POINT

12:30

A grey sky.

Spots of sleet splat on his windscreen causing other vehicles' lights to appear flared like stars, until wipers whoosh them away.

Bread, cheese and powdered soup, sit on his passenger seat.

For a second time today he slowly drives up to that entrance gate of the Self Storage Complex but this time has to wait for his turn behind other customer vehicles.

Window wipers grip and rumble on almost dry glass.

Slowly moving forward he causes an LCD panel to light up by tapping buttons.

ERROR please try again.

A second attempt to enter his four digit numerical code displays an identical message and behind him, a grey Audi with tinted windows seems impatient, advancing uncomfortably close to his rear bumper.

This is awkward because he is now blocking others from entering; he can neither go forwards or backwards and there is no sign of any reception staff.

He looks at the keypad, about to make another attempt but before his fingers touch anything, rattling wheels and a powerful electric motor drag this large, heavy metal entrance gate sideways; and so with some relief Reed drives over its threshold.

Then astonishment.

That grey Audi so close to his backside, makes a dash to get across before the gate has time to close, without entering a code number; but fails.

Powerful electric motors combine gate metal with car, pushing and squeezing this Audi against a huge post, vice like; and if there was an assumption that this mechanism would release its prey once contact had been made, it was wrong because instead it repeatedly hammers, rattling and thumping to the rhythm of bellowing sirens.

Storage Facility staff begin to appear from side doors,

running towards the commotion; but then the grey Audi does something else, it attempts to reverse, tearing off lumps of plastic trimming, ripping away part of its front bumper; wing mirrors disintegrate like tinsel, before a relenting gate finally retreats.

A smoke screeching wheel spin liberates and an impressive one hundred and eighty degree doughnut turn allows the Audi to escape, sparks flying from torn hanging bits and its front bumper which it scrapes along the tarmac.

Scattered pieces of broken vehicles always tell a haunting story and amongst this Audi's collection of fresh debris is a number plate; picking it up, Reed is surprised at the lack of cracks or fractures and on its back is a white paper label with handwritten text in blue ballpoint that says:

CRIMSON RAIN

Facility staff laugh nervously, conversing with recently arrived customers, apologising for any inconvenience; a few push brooms, moving pieces of broken Audi into a pile whilst others inspect gate wheels and motors that evidently need little mending, because staff stand a

side, allowing the powerful black ironwork to rattle back into place.

CHAPTER 5

Initially called ‘logFarm’, Reed Clarke’s original business goal was to build an inexpensive set of services to be used by British farmers.

[CONCEPT]

Abstract

Political quick fixes in the name of ‘food security’ have enabled highly profitable supermarkets to take control of Britain's food production, paying farmers a minimum for their produce.

A madness which forces British farmers to destroy and waste what they have spent time, money and effort growing because a supermarket deems their vegetables to be the wrong shape.

Similar behaviour occurred in some African communities where buyers and sellers took advantage of farmers’ lack of knowledge with regards to the real value of their

produce.

African farmers solved that problem by communicating with each other and the food-exchanges, using a single low cost mobile telephone, where a trusted, designated person, uses it to retrieve real time prices that farmers can legitimately charge for their crops.

logFarm will be built as an answer to the question: how can I help British farmers defeat supermarket tyranny while covering my own costs?

Overview:

Help farmers communicate by:

1. Enable farmers to share advice.

2. Enable farmers to swap and share equipment.

3. Improve monitoring of their fields, buildings, crops, livestock, etc.

1 & 2 maybe as easy as using existing 'web forum' software.

3. will be a new product: a Digital Monitoring System (DMS).

logFarm DMS

Essentials

- logFarm will require little maintenance.

- User interface must be intuitive, very few buttons.

- Low cost to the customer with an optional maintenance fee.

- Will plug into ordinary domestic computer networks.

[END CONCEPT]

Ideas are easy, we all have them and sometimes even write them down but our imaginings are worthless until transformed into a product that customers are willing to pay for and buy.

We could build it and cross fingers or we can do some market research by speaking to our target audience; but knocking on doors and speaking to strangers is

daunting.

A product idea has to be challenged, submerged into a bucket full of peoples' torpid juice, before wringing it out to see if anything remains, because sadly most of those disappointing judgements will be valid.

Handling mistrust and impatience is another essential quality; and after describing his idea, most just pointed to popular social networks that they claim already do a good enough job; oh, and not a single person believed remote cameras would be of any use, that is, unless they can fly.

Incorporating flying cameras into his project was not an option since he would need to invent too much so his 'logFarm DMS' project morphed into a surveillance product, no farms required.

A noble cause, helping to save farmers from supermarket dictatorship; but a rubber booted lady said to Reed, "Only a few farms in the UK are big enough to supply supermarkets."

She continued, "My farm's produce goes to Scotland and Ireland where it is processed as ingredients for

bakeries, ping-meals, cakes, desserts, things like that; we also have a Farm Shop with a web page where locals can ‘click and collect’ or we deliver.”

Original concept scrapped, his new idea was brief.

[LOGFARM DMS]

A surveillance system that records audio and video 24/7, low bandwidth and minimal hardware requirements.

1. logFarm DMS will be autonomous, one or more boxes that just work.

2. A maintenance fee; hardware does not have to be purchased by the customer it can be rented as part of a maintenance agreement.

3. logFarm DMS will be (where possible) maintained remotely, keeping travel costs down.

4. Scalable; able to add cameras and boxes as required, without impacting performance.

[END LOGFARM DMS]

Conceptually Reed believed he was on to something but ‘the box’ still needed to be considered; strong enough to take a bump, perhaps withstand weather, be secure from infiltration, economical to purchase or build and programmable using Reed’s favourite computer programming language.

Mobile tablets became a candidate; they have plenty of computing power and building applications for mobile devices these days is quite straight forward; they also have their own battery, useful in case of a power cut, as well as a microphone, a camera, data storage, network connectivity plus their own screen and are relatively inexpensive.

After just a few weeks of work, basic software features were up and running and he was finally on a path to achieving something; a desperately needed antidote for a broken self confidence that was fractured, when, as an employee, he was escorted from his place of work for gross misconduct, accused of violence.

An office bully called Mark, spent his day dispensing verbal abuse whilst doing little else; but when finally he was confronted, Mark actually lost control of his bowels, audibly releasing bodily gases as he made a rapid

retreat to Human Resources in order to complain.

Here, this vocally abhorrent man weaved a tale so exaggerated that others in the room stared sideways in disbelief; but Mark felt terribly belittled, realising that any despotic authority he had extorted by intimidating colleagues, was probably now gone.

Mark being Mark, he even tried threatening company bosses with imminent legal action if they did not carry out his demands and sack his new nemesis; however, this-now rather pathetic bully was once again silenced when it was demonstrated, he had been using their email network to disseminate pornographic images and hyperlinks; an activity that Mark's employment contract clearly categorises as gross misconduct.

Yet, Mark-the-bully remains employed.

Reed Clarke had never been sacked before; shattered, embarrassed and disappointed with himself for allowing a fool like Mark to make him feel so angry.

Post traumatic.

Reed used to love his job, he was good at it, writing and

building software but Mark-the-bully contaminated all joy, treating courtesy and kindness as a weakness, encouraging abrasive communication, leaving Reed angry when he left the office and sleepless with the dread of having to deal with him and his gang.

In retrospect Reed could have just taken time off ill and examined his future options but instead, one day Reed lost his cool, lost his job and became unemployable; because very few software development companies will want a violent person working for them.

Reed Clarke's career appeared to be over so he decided to build a self employed business based around his own software products; the fantasy being, he could work alone and use what he builds to improve his own skill set, expanding his options for when eventually he applied for a proper job.

Obviously he needed to stretch his savings as far as possible whilst getting his business up and running, and at the time Reed considered the fact that his accommodation lease was almost up, to be a fortunate coincidence.

Of course, just a temporary measure but he spent some

time finding campsites with a shower block where he could pitch a tent for weeks at a time, even during winter months, somewhere to sleep and wash.

Next he needed a base from which to work, so he rented a Self Storage Unit designated a ‘work shop’; cheap to rent with free electricity, permission to install a telephone line, and plenty of space to store belongings.

Facility rules limit usage to between eight o’clock in the morning to six o’clock in the evening, seven days a week, and sleeping is absolutely forbidden.

Welcome to the latent world of the working homeless.

Five years have passed.

His tent is gone, vandalised and everything he carelessly kept in it, including a laptop, was eventually stolen by local crime groups; and in hindsight he should have taken his tent with him every day when he left for work.

Campsites in the UK are monitored by crime collectives, watching for unattended caravan awnings and tents; well practised and operating with the cooperation of

campsite employees, these criminals even pitch up themselves during peak periods to watch for ripe pickings, a cat amongst the pigeons as it were.

Complain at your own risk.

That last night, he stood staring at what was left of his tent, flapping ribbons of torn canvas; a campsite worker blamed Canadian geese before warning him that he should clear up and leave.

Fine rain and thundering wind.

His first attempt to sleep in a car was not a fun experience, reclined in his passenger seat, eyes wide open, rocking from side to side as lorries rumbled past, their head lights as bright as an arc welder's spark.

Blue and flashing, a tap on his driver's side window.

"It's illegal to stop here," a police woman insisted, "You need to use a motorway service station."

Repeated doses of stressful adrenaline had taken their toll that night and Reed was in desperate need of sleep, so he drove for another 25 miles in search of a

motorway service station, where, If a fee is paid he can park for a few hours relatively unmolested; but this kind of sanctuary is unpredictable because, as Reed would discover, no matter where you go in Great Britain, people's distaste for those destitute runs deep.

CHAPTER 6

2008 January 13, Sunday.

13:00

Self storage facility public announcement static.

"The fire alarms will be tested in a moment. No action is required. Thank you."

Reed quickly places a finger in each ear just before a hideous howling of an alarm system announces the banging of sprung fire doors that resonate throughout this complex; a starter gun for staff to wander gangways shouting into radios, confirming the correct operation of things, and then, "The fire alarm test is complete. Thank you."

Hot tea steam spirals upwards sparkling through desk

lamp LEDs, like a calming visualisation, harmonising the faint clattering of metal shutter doors signalling the arrival and departure of customers; a dustbin orchestra mix of trolleys, vehicles, conversations and child laughter, where silence is never a play list item; a hypnotic ambience that like a soft pillow, gently and tenaciously seduces.

Unconscious.

Ten hours dissolve.

23:00

Fire alarm, again.

Snoring a panicking snort of unintelligible speech, he falls out of his chair on to a cold concrete floor, his heart pounding.

That bloody noise.

An analogue watch in this windowless box proves useless for determining whether it is morning or night, however something is happening so he should at least step outside but there are voices echoing in the corridor.

A reluctance to open his unit's large metal shutter door while people speak nearby, causes him to refocus his attention on an array of computer screens.

Shaking a computer mouse and tapping keys to unlock a screensaver, live video feeds instantly add a little bit more illumination to an otherwise very grim environment, revealing four or five people approaching his storage unit wearing fire fighting equipment.

He takes some deep breaths through his nose but detects no unusual fire related odours.

Ceasing their approach, these fire fighters extract a large odd looking camera from a bag which they point directly at his storage unit; and whatever it reveals prompts a female to order, "Abort!" which apparently means, 'stop and leave' because they pick up their equipment, turnaround and disappear out of view.

Moments later alarms fall silent.

Reed has outstayed his welcome by five hours and needs to leave but before he does, he grabs a wash bag, exits his unit and heads for ground floor toilets to

brush his teeth and do some other lavatory related things.

Down stairs, whatever warranted fire fighters to sneak around this Self Storage Facility seems to have completely disappeared because there are no signs of any emergency services and reception is closed, dark and shuttered.

Ten minutes later and ablutions complete, he heads back upstairs to stow his wash equipment and pick up a night bag before leaving.

Wait.

Perhaps to most people, one cold and dusty corridor is no different to any other but there is an instinct common amongst creatures who hide; an impressive ability to know when something is out of place within their domain.

It should be dark.

Lit corridor motion activated strip lights are always accompanied by patrolling staff or other customers and both are rarely silent so he waits and listens but there

are no footsteps, chatter or departing vehicle noises.

Minutes pass, strip light timers elapse and this corridor is thrown into darkness; so he walks slowly towards his storage unit, himself triggering sensors.

A yellow A5 piece of paper is stuck to his storage unit door with hand written words that read:

CRIMSON RAIN

CHAPTER 7

2008 January 14, Monday.

00:45

A small residential parking area is well lit and surrounded by extraordinarily aggressive residents who throw fireworks under the cars of sleeping strangers.

Misanthropic.

Beyond stealth helicopters, few things that people do surprises Reed any more.

It is difficult to be optimistic for Great Britain's prospects when its citizens find it so easy to hate; and if hand guns were accessible then this country would be engaged in a perpetual twelve sided civil war, every street a no-go area, one big killing field.

From Reed’s point of view and his homelessness aside, British society is caustic and pestiferous with it, absent of anything good.

Tonight, his passenger window is open to facilitate better hearing of approaching footsteps and vehicles; but long exposure to this freezing breeze would be unhealthy, however right now it is refreshing and anyway he has no intention of staying all night, especially since he has already slept.

That number plate dropped by a brain-sick grey Audi driver lays across his lap, it and its white sticky label, pristine.

Opening a notebook slash diary, he writes an entry:

[DIARY ENTRY]

Monday,

14 January 2008.

The note left on my unit door can only have been a message but what does ‘crimson rain’ mean? it’s beyond me. Why would they (whoever they are) believe that I know anything about it.

All this excitement started after I spotted that helicopter last night but what sort of organisation would become so agitated in this way. And if they wanted to stay clandestine why then leave a note on my door which links them directly to that mad Audi driver and their number plate.

With the same words written on the back I suspect it is a false number plate because it dislodged and fell off so easily. It’s spotless front and back, even though the roads are covered in wet dirt.

What about those fire people? Reckon that box thing they pointed at my unit was a thermal imaging camera and it revealed me inside, prompting them to leg it.

But why not just knock on the door?

I know that sometimes the fire brigade use industrial

buildings such as storage facilities as practice areas to help new recruits get used to heavy equipment and what-not but why the fire alarm? Do fire alarms give the fire brigade legitimate access?

I fantasise that a powerful group of fools suddenly perceive me as being a threat because I saw their blooming helicopter.

If these activities are being carried out by an intelligence or anti terrorist group then they are not very good. They seem like a bunch of amateurs and amateurs are dangerous, irrational and are inclined to use bulldozers to solve everything.

[END DIARY ENTRY]

Main road, a vehicle slowly drives past, its reflective body work hinting at police markings; passing headlights grow bright once more as the large yellow and blue van returns, slowly creeping closer, finally stopping behind Reed's car with lamps as bright as stadium halogens that flood through his rear window.

Two men get out and walk either side of Reed Clarke's vehicle.

Confused to discover that Reed's driver's seat is empty, a police officer shrugs his shoulders at his colleague, who leans down to an open passenger side window and asks, "What are you doing?"

"Writing a diary."

"Why are you writing a diary in a car?"

No reply.

Holding out his hand the police man says, "Let me see."

Without hesitation Reed closes his book and hands it over.

"Do you have any ID?"

Reed reaches under his seat and retrieves a black and red plastic folder, relinquishing that too.

"What's this?"

"There are various identification numbers and details in there."

DATA POINT

Walking in front of Reed's car, these hi-viz wearing coppers exchange Reed's confiscated documents, before one of them orders the other, "Get his mobile."

Reed is already holding a copper coloured Nokia at an opened window, causing this officer to pause and grin nervously before seizing it and handing it to his colleague who in turn carries Reed's folder, telephone and diary back to the police van.

From his passenger side wing mirror Reed can see photographic flashes, again and again.

At least five minutes pass before one of them once more appears, holding a yellow piece of paper and through Reed's open window asks, "What does 'crimson rain' mean?"

"I don't know what it means. That was stuck on my office door."

Shaking his head at his colleague he returns Reed's mobile telephone and paperwork but pointing at Reed's red and black folder, "Why do you have a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate?"

“I clean offices.”

“You’re a cleaner?”

“Yes.”

“I don’t know of any office cleaners who need one of those certificates,” presses the doubtful police officer.

“I clean the Masonic building in Pepperton. They insisted on these certificates because they wont employ anyone with a criminal record.”

Lifting his chin and looking down his nose, “How long have you worked there?”

“About three years.”

“Are you a mason?”

“No.”

Then, without salutation both officers get back into their van but go nowhere.

Reed places all items on his vacant driver's seat and checks for his yellow piece of paper which has also been returned, folded and tucked back into his diary; but seemingly unnoticed by the coppers, a messenger bag and an upside-down number plate, both still lay at his feet.

He could not drive away even if he wanted to, with that big yellow van parked right up his arse so he just sits and waits, listening to loud police communication systems that squawk and chime through their own partially opened and misty-moisture saturated vehicle windows.

It takes another ten minutes before the cop waggon drives away, but out of defiance Reed decides to stick around and test a notion, an idea that these fuzz have not gone far.

After sliding his plastic folder back under the passenger seat, he puts everything else into the messenger bag where a black laptop also resides, before closing all windows, exiting and securing the holdall inside the boot.

Time for a stroll.

Obstructing pavements, vehicles are parked everywhere.

Occasionally Christmas lights still sparkle, clinging to those beloved previous weeks, whilst curtains inside glow opaque and front door wall lamps cause wet steps to glisten.

He stops walking, accidentally making eye contact with a surprised cat who silently crawls away, disappearing into darkness; and up ahead, partially obscured behind a huge white Mercedes wagon is that same police van, its occupants shrouded in shadow.

Reed crosses the road and turns a corner where there is a wet wooden bench; so after dropping his gloves on the damp seat surface, he sits.

Taking a slow deep breath, the cold night air lowers his blood pressure slightly, a physical relief which causes his skull to creak, but those frequent dull chest pains that have become part of his normality, persist.

Looking up, much of this night sky is clear but with only a few bright objects penetrating the local light pollution.

Behind him an engine starts and revs, preceding powerful headlights of a police van which stops at this junction, pauses for a moment, before turning right and slowly driving away.

Closing his eyes, he breaths deeply in an attempt to control the painful heaviness, but nearby an owl hoots which for Reed denotes that it is time to move.

Back at his car, he appends words to his latest diary entry.

[DIARY ENTRY]

:
:
1:30 am

Pigs: Bloater Road car park.

TX54HHVJ :: Pig van.

Two Caucasian males:

1. Caucasian, Grey hair, unshaven, heavy build, 6 foot,

late 50s to early 60s.

2. Caucasian, Dark hair, unshaven, slim build. 6 foot, late 20s.

Neither told me who they were or why they wanted my information. The older one appears to have photographed this diary, page by page.

They also asked about ‘crimson rain’ WTF!!

It would appear I am being followed.

They fiddled with my telephone so I will assume it is now being tracked too.

Pigs!!

[END DIARY ENTRY]

CHAPTER 8

2008 January 14, Monday.

02:15

DATA POINT

Brand name alight, ablaze, blazing bright; the shop front whispers sweetly, a siren song, “Come closer, come inside, out of the cold night.”

Reed parks amongst other late night shoppers and heads into the supermarket to buy a news paper.

Tall grey metal poles stand equidistant, some with large luminous globes, others nest cameras that rotate robotically.

Above them while they shop, where customers never go, is a chilled and rarely visited second floor, housing racks of tightly packed computers that record video and audio from cameras and microphones located in and around this shop; processing Loyalty Cards that are already anchored to customers’ buying habits, telephone numbers and home addresses; instantly linking vehicles, faces and conversations at the point of purchase.

Lost are those who never spend.

In 2008, United Kingdom Data Protection laws are impotent; and the business of data collection is copyrightable and very profitable.

DATA POINT

In 2006 there were two computers living on this second floor, storing and selling customer data; two years later, computers have been upgraded to cope with demand and there are now twenty eight of them.

Selling access to these computers netted their owners three million pounds sterling (tax year of 2006 to 2007), projecting a net income of at least ten million pounds sterling for the next tax period.

04:15 local time. Republic of Cyprus.

A massive six sided concrete balustrade is interconnected by glass towers that give and restrict access to an airfield within; and is also known as:

The Henge.

Enormous hangers, tall and wide, occupy this airfield's centre, over looking helicopters scattered about its grid.

Inside Perimeter Tower Four, Flamenca Cessoria navigates gangways and desks of a large open plan office space, passing glowing screens that are beaming factory default computer operating systems.

DATA POINT

Carrying a backpack over both shoulders, a cup of tea and an orange folder, she drops the paper work onto her desk with a wallop, takes a mouthful of tea and sits herself in front of three flat computer screens, all spinning the same screen saver; two words: *secreta hostium*

Translation: secrets of the enemy

Jogging a computer mouse instantly reveals an email program indicating that there are sixty five unread messages; there were none when she left work last night.

Scrolling through a bold list of email titles, many appear to contain the words ‘Reed Clarke’ but the oldest one reads:

Photographs supplied by the Brits.

It is quickly obvious that images attached to this one message are the same as those she is already carrying in her orange folder.

[MESSAGE BODY]

DATA POINT

These documents are approximately one hour old and Clarke, the person of interest, apparently gave the British police permission to photograph them.

Whether we believe that or not, the reason we have been asked to Box this man is because he has been caught spying on one of our stealth helicopters, in the middle of the night, with an ordinary pair of binoculars !!

(I am confident and) I have assured the Brits that this is not possible, but they are inflexible.

Please view camera footage stored on Brit police computer servers.

The Brits have a reasonable complaint: the tech we are leasing them appears to be faulty.

This is an expanding situation so we need to box Reed Clarke and discover his agenda.

[END MESSAGE BODY]

Flamenca opens her orange folder and starts examining printed images inside; they appear to be of a hand written diary on ordinary lined paper, where even dates

have been penned.

[DIARY ENTRY]

Mon, 11th June 2007

Pepperton service station last night.

logFarm, there's a problem.

Multithreading, buffering and databases.

Memory leak.

The recording-buffer can not write its data to the database fast enough so while we dump the buffer's contents to the database a back log of data builds up.

No matter how many buffers we have, purging their data to the database is just too slow so buffers fill up and the computer runs out of memory.

The original idea behind the buffers was to reduce database activity but I now realise that this is just too problematic, if actually possible.

I've over complicated things. Need to rethink and simplify again.

[END DIARY ENTRY]

[DIARY ENTRY]

Tue, 12th June 2007

Riverside supermarket most of the night. Moreton Road lay-by for a couple of hours.

Experimented with writing video and audio data directly to the hard drive today.

Recorded data is now wrapped in multiple daily directories. For example, today's directory will be called: 2007-06-12

At this point I'm still using buffers to reduce disk writes.

[END DIARY ENTRY]

Flamenca looks back at her centre screen and presses Control and Escape keys simultaneously, causing the Start menu to be displayed, allowing her to type:

cmd

A command line terminal materialises where she types some *whois* command combinations, based on unusual words written in Reed Clarke's diary; eventually revealing that an Internet domain name is being leased by a Reed Clarke with contact details located in Great Britain.

On her left screen, she starts a computer desktop sharing application which will enable her to control another computer; and after entering an IP address, the screen is immediately transformed into a separate computer desktop, controlling a file server that resides somewhere in the United Kingdom and belongs to the British police.

Navigating a labyrinthine directory structure, she locates and double clicks a video file.

An hour glass spins for a few seconds before a strange dark video image begins moving, apparently from a helicopter's point of view, looking down on a busy motorway with its camera currently set to thermal mode.

DATA POINT

Bright orange dials tick slowly, drawn below strange dark video images, showing air speed, altitude, pitch and roll.

The camera operator concentrates on a lorry park where trucks and trailers sit cold but cabs and tyres glow warm.

The helicopter circles these huge vehicles for a few minutes, occasionally magnifying trailers and their underneath; but then banks sharply causing structures to tilt and dials to spin.

Levelling out, this operator’s attention focuses on a lone vehicle in an adjacent parking area where an individual is leaning backwards against a car, pointing a pair of binoculars back up at this aircraft and even after the pilot circles, the observer continues to track them.

Switching between various imagery modes, poor light defeats all efforts to obtain a clear image of this target; and just as they hover, the observer below disappears inside the car but does not drive away; so this aircraft manoeuvres again apparently attempting to photograph a number plate.

Flamenca pauses the action for a moment and saves a

screenshot of some barely legible vehicle number plate characters, before resuming play back.

An accomplished helicopter pilot, Famenca is trained in the art of flying Cyprus Air Command aircraft that have been adapted with stealth technologies; technologies that are designed, developed and tested at this airfield by her and her fellow Cypriots; so when these British pilots descend to approximately two metres above their target, Flamenca leans closer to the screen shaking her head because this is not how a clandestine aircraft should be operated; but if this reckless manoeuvre was an attempt to force their target to flee, they fail.

Eventually these pilots do what they should have done in the first place, they leave.

The video time stamp jumps a couple of hours, where we are once again looking down on their target vehicle, this time from a sensible distance; headlights switch on and this vehicle’s heat signature gradually increases; exhaust plumes white and small warm creatures scatter.

As it joins a motorway there is another time stamp jump, now looking down on a well lit but empty supermarket parking area where their target has stopped once more.

Switching modes again, this camera operator seems keen to emphasise this car's solitude.

Flamenca mumbles, "Why haven't local police on the ground intercepted this apparent threat?"

More video jumps as the target leaves and both the helicopter and vehicle arrive at a big industrial building.

Losing focus for a few seconds, large blurry letters are displayed that appear to be written on a huge billboard, eventually sharpening so they can be deciphered:

Lock & Store Depot Ltd.

A telephone number and web address are also printed large.

Flamenca takes another screen shot.

After waiting at a gate, the driver follows tarmac, exits their car and appears to enter this complex.

Circling, the camera operator magnifies an entrance door which their target presumably just used, bringing

video footage to a sudden end.

Typing the Lock & Store Depot Ltd web address into Firefox, she clicks *Contact us,* where various details are listed, including an address matching her whois search, perhaps suggesting that Reed Clarke is using this Self Storage Facility for more than just storage, he probably rents an office and operates a business from that location.

Shifting attention to a computer screen on her right, she clicks an icon labelled *Box*, which resurrects an application filled with endless columns of check boxes, text boxes and pull down lists.

Clicking a text area labelled *Addresses / residence*, she copies and pastes Reed's web domain contact address into it, typing other essential basic information into fields labelled *Name*, *Ethnicity* and *Gender*.

Tapping F7 on her keyboard causes a search text box to appear, into which she types: *vehicle*

'Vehicles' section bounces into view.

From Firefox, she opens a new tab and connects to

United Kingdom Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency web site, where it is possible to check whether a vehicle has appropriate annual credentials.

Reviewing her screenshots, she types a car registration number captured by that Brit helicopter camera, into a text box prominent on the DVLA web site, causing a sheet of values to be displayed, describing an associated vehicle, enabling Flamenca to copy and paste relevant information into her Box database application.

F7 again, she types: *terrorist*

First item in this section is a pull down list, ordered by priority:

- *State*
- *Religious*
- *Political, domestic*
- *Vandalism*
- *Civil disorder, non-violent*

She selects: *Civil disorder, non-violent*

This critical update causes her Box application to

change its appearance from a typical banal grey, to a skin made from various shades of amber, signalling to anyone who views this record that Reed Clarke is a Boxed terrorist.

Once accused, never innocent.

Across the world notifications begin to trickle through intelligence and border defence agencies, automatically adding Reed Clarke's known particulars to their own proprietary terrorism advisory systems, dynamically updating them as changes are made.

Flamenca clicks on a pull down list labelled, *Known Terrorist Groups* from which she selects: *Unknown*

and populates other fields as follows:

Members (quantity) :: *Unknown*
History of violence :: *Unknown*
Fire arms :: *Unknown*
Explosives :: *Unknown*
Military training :: *Unknown*
Martial arts :: *Unknown*
Cyber :: *Competent*

In a field labelled *Database References*, she types:

2008 January 14

Initial entry.

Photographs and a video file are accessible from British police file servers.

All usual British data collection services are available.

– End of line

CHAPTER 9

2008 January 14, 08:30, local time. Republic of Cyprus.

A symbiotic deniability.

Henge analysts air-gap governments from civil rights issues that would otherwise erupt if their own ministries were caught scrutinising friendly citizens in this way, classifying people as terrorists for carrying a pair of binoculars for example; and in return people with access to British military coffers, lease Cypriot's unique and powerful stealth technologies.

Henge analysts use a variety of applications that they themselves build, to search collections of heterogeneous, electronic depositories.

At a command line, a primitive ascii spinner rotates, occasionally slowing as Flamenca's computer script traverses remote networks, located thousands of miles away, generating reams of structured textual results that might make reference to Flamenca's Reed Clarke; and while her computer program ferrets, she re-examines her orange folder of images.

[DIARY ENTRY]

Sat 16 June 2007

Duck Well Service Station last night, all night.

logFarm :: Buffers are gone.

No noticeable loss of performance and a whole chunk of source code has been commented out.

Memory usage is better and the application has become simpler to read and maintain.

[END DIARY ENTRY]

[DIARY ENTRY]

Sun 17 June, 2007

Piller Road most of the night.

Removing Buffers and the database has mended the memory leak.

Currently all parameters are hard coded. It's now time to create configuration files where values such as camera resolution, camera names, colour adjustments and so on, will be written. The current plan is to use XML.

[END DIARY ENTRY]

Similar nerdy writings fill each page; there are no references to relationships or grievances and they all start with a road name or parking area location.

Flamenca ponders whether Reed Clarke is homeless.

A beeping sound indicates that her search is complete

and results, structured text files, have been wrapped in a collection of helpfully named directories that await her attention.

Initially she will extract disparate blocks of information from her retrieved tome, ordering them in such a way that Britain's judicial system can create a narrative to be used against Reed Clarke, sufficient to warrant an arrest, ideally for breaching Britain's Terrorism Act 2006.

A loose house of cards, bogus evidence is easily dismissed so a foundation has to be laid and gaps need to be filled.

As blocks of information are gathered and arranged, Flamenca will expand her search to find associates with tricky histories so that British Special Branch squads can bait, entrap and plant physical evidence.

Most notorious of these false flag gangs, call themselves:

Crimson Rain

CHAPTER 10

2008 January 14, 17:50, local time. Republic of Cyprus.

With some breaks for food, drink and toilet visits, seven hours dissolve.

Passport searches, Companies House, Revenue and Customs, National Insurance, National Health Service, Census, public transport and bank account queries, render hundreds of Reed Clarkes into megabytes of textual files, regardless of whether they were recently dead, alive or pseudonymous; and amongst those ascribed, her target will probably be written.

Just a few factual threads, that is all she requires.

Backache, time for another cup of tea.

An electric kettle glows blue and water bubbles slowly; emptying a teapot of used teabags, she rinses it under cold water and drops in two fresh ones.

Resting her lower back against a kitchen bench, attention drifts to the ceiling, its tiles, their cracks and pits, a dusty metal frame holding it all in place and as a

consequence of prohibited cleaner access, old ceiling cobwebs that gently sway.

Around her neck hangs an identification card flipped over, back to front, disclosing an inscription which reads:

Remove from society, those who threaten liberty.

Teapot she fills and with a teaspoon she stirs, lid replaced and a tea cosy laid and in an empty cup with milk from a fridge, she pours.

With a fresh cup of tea, it occurs, that Reed Clarke probably makes use of petrol stations located at supermarkets who's car parks he frequents.

Slurping her beverage, she makes an enthusiastic dash for her desk and after rapidly flipping through printed orange folder images, she finds what she is looking for.

[DIARY ENTRY]

Tue, 12th June 2007

Riverside supermarket most of the night.
:

[END DIARY ENTRY]

Commercial Domestic Databases, serving customer data, collected by supermarkets, museums, stadiums, gymnasiums, wherever people congregate, is precious metal, forged from personal information.

A catalogue of Commercial Domestic Databases in Great Britain does not exist but a catalogue of those who own them, does; a list of Off Shore Shell Companies, false businesses, who tunnel millions of pounds a year into territories willing to keep secrets for a fee.

Thousands of Shell Companies attached to British domiciled businesses are catalogued and one of them has a database that Flemenca wants to access.

From a cygwin command line she types:

cat /offShore/britOffShore.txt | *grep -i “riverside”*

Lines of text quickly roll up the screen that include physical locations, Internet addresses, user names and passwords but there are too many results so she tries

again:

cat /offShore/britOffShore.txt | grep -i “riverside” | grep -i “Berkshire”

Many lines of text, comprising a single record, scroll by.

Rolling her mouse wheel up, three Uniform Resource Identifiers come into view:

tubdb:////bricklane/riverside/video.xml
tubdb:////bricklane/riverside/audio.xml
tubdb:////bricklane/riverside/loyalty.xml

There is also an Internet address comprising of numbers and full stops, which she types into FireFox.

A white web page with large black font is presented and clicking a button labelled *Sign in*, a new view offers her three text boxes labelled, *User name*, *Password* and *URI*.

Copying and pasting, she populates user name and password credentials; and for *URI* she pastes:

tubdb:////bricklane/riverside/loyalty.xml

Tapping the Enter key, an hour glass spins allowing her time to swig another mouthful of tea; and here we are, a loyalty.xml search page.

She starts with a name, *Reed Clarke* and taps Enter.

Six results are returned.

Carefully moving down the page, scanning each record, Mr Clarke's car registration appears, surrounded by piles of other information, describing his spending habits, what days he shops, shopping history (which begins nearly ten years ago), other shopping locations, risk assessment in terms of low, medium and high (set to high), list of other people (clickable names) with whom he could be associated, an economic assessment, Internet details, telephone numbers and a home address.

Excellent.

From her rather large collection of earlier search results she uses grep once more to highlight all textual records that include Reed Clarke's house number and street name.

More than a hundred and eighty different files are listed, pertaining to thirty six uniquely named people.

Additional grepping for gender and date of birth, reveals thirty women, all of similar ages, who apparently lived at Mr Clarke’s home, all at roughly the same time.

Thirty people in one house.

Online satellite images reveal a terraced building with a small drive way, where two cars were once parked and a translucent copyright notice which dates the image as being just over a year old.

Something is wrong, this house could not accommodate thirty plus people.

Instinctively Flemenca makes an assumption that most, if not all of these women are actually just one person and this revelation surprises her.

Picking up her mug of tea, her chair squeaks a little as she leans back.

When tasked, she assumed this was just another false

flag exercise, perhaps covering up dodgy Brit police contraband dealings, and it still might be, but this man Reed Clarke, whether he knows it or not, is linked to something suspicious.

Up until this point it has not occurred to Flamenca to search Britain's judicial files since British police, regardless of their motives or legitimacy, always have good access to their own judicial databases; and using their 'once accused, never innocent' policy, they typically pad box-requests with all manner of peculiar yet 'officially documented' accusations.

Time to give her own databases a go.

searchBox.pl -all -combine="firstName","lastName" -criteria="Theresa Mainard","Nicola Stook","Agela Morris" …

It is a long command line that includes all thirty plus women names.

A textual propeller spins.

Time for a refill and a toilet break.

Ten minutes later, strolling back to her desk, she notices that a few other people have arrived, tapping keyboards and staring at screens; a late shift by any other name but her co-workers do not have regimented schedules, their darkly circled eyes hinting at long flying hours and ground work.

Outside, green, red and white lights ascend and descend, helicopters taking off and landing, whilst flashing orange airport vehicles snake across runways, disappearing and reappearing from hangers.

Her computer has finished searching and displays the following information:

Exact Matches: 5
Similar matches: 15
Identical aliases: 9
Associates: 96
Regions: United Kingdom, Argentina, Russia, Australia, Hong Kong, Norway, Italy

Exact matches:
1. Kelly Ascook, alias: Rachel Jales, id: 2385743
2. Heather Grandwater, alias: Rachel Jales, id: 1956855
3. Theresa Mainard, alias: Rachel Jales, id: 1976547

4. Angela Morris, alias: Rachel Jales, id: 2215733
5. Mary Fordinglee, alias: Rachel Jales, id: 2650019

Similar matches:
1. Nicola Cook. Alias: Rachel Jales, Box: 502
:

Unable to detach her gaze she breathes, “Vay!”

CHAPTER 11

2008 January 14, 18:55, local time. Republic of Cyprus.

Into a search box Flamenca types:

502

A screen full of orange text and headings quickly appears.

Rolling her mouse wheel she is struck by how many monochrome photographs there are, chronologically ordered, each underlined with textual descriptions.

Instinctively scanning for ‘Reed Clarke’ reveals nothing so she starts to read this Box record’s notes.

[NOTES]

Edited, x5, 1982
Edited, x4, 1983
Edited, x6 1983
Edited, x13 1984
Edited, x5 1985
Edited, x4 1986
Edited, x3 1987
Edited, x4 1991
Edited, x2 1992
Edited, x2 1998
Edited, x1 2002
Edited, x1 2007

It is believed to be a fact, that Nicola Cook and Rachel Jales are the same person and the co-conspirator of the Soviet spy, Xavia Nadra.

Xavia Nadra (ID: 489), Tasked by British Special Branch.

DATA POINT

The following text has been transcribed from original paper documentation; photographs have been scanned.

Digital databases were not in place when this investigation started so the following notes occasionally compress the time line in order to clarify.

Original paper work and photographs are archived by British Military Intelligence.

British Special Branch organised all aspects of surveillance and we (Central Intelligence Service [Our designation @ 1979]) were tasked with monitoring the communications of Soviet couriers passing through Turkey and the Black Sea.

In the late 1970's, a collection of Soviet double agents code named Garnet (later, Red Garnet) warned British Foreign Intelligence that Argentina's Secretariat Of Intelligence was coordinating with various Russian ministries to invade British dependent territories in the South Atlantic; and because waters around these islands have potential for natural gas and oil drilling

(including other southern hemisphere resources [precious metals and minerals]), their motives were believed to be: a significant increase in Argentinian and Russian economic advantage.

It wasn't until two years after Argentina's failed invasion of the Falkland Islands, that a terrible possibility came to light.

As a result of the rapid absorption of East Berlin by West Germany, unguarded Soviet intelligence archives exposed Argentina's post invasion plans: use the Falkland Islands as a joint naval, air and Intercontinental Missile base, with the Soviets.

It can not be over stated how indispensable double agents were to the British, for had they not revealed Xavia Nadra, he would have gone unnoticed, crossing borders, pretending to be an Argentinian entrepreneurial engineer.

Although the full implications of Argentina's plans were unknown (even to Garnet), in 1980 Garnet convinced British Foreign Intelligence that Xavia Nadra should be considered a danger to the security of Great Britain, its territories and interests.

DATA POINT

A surveillance net was thrown over Xavia Nadra.

Once scrutinised, it became clear that he was being handled by Russian Fixers; fellow conspirators who blur the lines between organised crime and intelligence operatives; where all crime groups in Russia function at the behest of various Soviet intelligence agencies, enabling them to make use of international criminal networks to mule people, contraband and data.

British Special Branch operated a “long rope” policy; monitoring Xavia Nadra and one other person, a woman known as Rachel Jales, allowing them to plot for as long as possible, in order to collect an optimum amount of evidence before arrest.

It paid off, becoming obvious that Xavia Nadra had a more complex agenda beyond just gathering intelligence for an upcoming invasion attempt of the Falkland Islands.

Before he was arrested in 1981, Xavia Nadra facilitated the organisation and transportation of protesters to various British Ministry Of Defence locations where nuclear weapons were to be stored. This information

should have been top secret, yet Xavia Nadra was remarkably well informed.

Anti war and anti nuclear weapon protesters descended on three MOD locations that were destined to house United States Air Force missiles and their war heads.

Xavia Nadra succeeded in creating public outcry, exposing the fact that nuclear weapons were being prepared for war on the door steps of ordinary people without consultation, undermining British citizen's trust in their own government.

The British government had to conclude and-was forced to inform NATO, that its own intelligence service had been infiltrated by those with Soviet allegiance.

Russia's propaganda machine made good use of Britain's embarrassment, repeatedly accusing NATO of provoking nuclear conflict by arming United States Air Force bases, located in Great Britain, with nuclear weapons; compounding protesters' alarm, intensifying their determination to build permanent tent villages around the perimeter of UK-USAF bases.

Undoubtedly, an Argentinian-Russian alliance would

have used British and NATO's deceit to justify deployment of their own equivalent weaponry on the Falkland Islands (had Argentina's invasion been successful).

Greenham Common in Berkshire UK, was a United States Air Force base where, in the late 1970s, nuclear weapon silos were being constructed and nearing completion.

Xavia Nadra and Rachel Jales set up a protest village on the perimeter of Greenham Common USAF.

Late 1981, both Xavia Nadra and Rachel Jales were arrested and incarcerated at Northern Ireland.

Rachel Jales was released in 1990 and she immediately returned to the peace camp that surrounded Greenham Common's US Air Force base; but her reunion was not welcoming; she was treated with suspicion by all and some openly accused her of spying for Russia.

Yet she remained with the camp for four more months.

Trauma caused by years of interrogation that she endured while in prison, left Rachel Jales with severe

psychosis that manifested itself as paranoia and sometimes violent behaviour, requiring large amounts of medication to suppress her outbursts.

One evening at the camp, three women suffered knife wounds and were taken to hospital and among them was Rachel Jales.

When Surveillance Officers arrived at the hospital, all three women had gone, vanishing without a trace.

Coincidentally, a month later, all members of the Red Garnet collective were recalled to a missile base in Kazakhstan where soviet nuclear weapons were being dismantled; and during an accident (reported to the International Atomic Energy Agency), twenty three men died from prolonged exposure to radiation, including all members of the Red Garnet collective and at least six others suspected of being NATO sympathisers (neither confirmed or denied by NATO Intelligence).

A surreal event occurred in early 1997 when a total of nine British passports were stamped on the same day by three different border controls: Hong Kong, Norway and Italy; all nine passports were for people claiming the name of: Rachel Jales.

DATA POINT

Interpol contacted British Special Branch after a vigilant Hong Kong border control officer reported that she had stamped three Rachel Jales passports during the course of her working day.

A bulletin was transmitted to all NATO border controls, at which point Italy and Norway confirmed they had also allowed six British passport holding women, named Rachel Jales, into their respective territories.

Each passport was unique, as were their listed home addresses; none of their pictures could be matched by facial recognition processes and all documents appeared to have been obtained legally.

However, the 'Cypriot S-300 crisis' of '97 and its blow back, absorbed much of Cyprus Intelligence Service resources for the following three and a half years; but in 2003 British Special Branch and CIS systematically exposed five of those (border crossing) Rachel Jales, as people who previously identified themselves by other names.

All five women had changed their names by Deed Poll to: Rachel Jales

These five have been databased as people using Rachel Jales as an alias.

From the border crossing nine, four still remain unaccounted for, no longer living at the addresses listed by their passports.

However, the Rachel Jales who is also known as the co-conspirator of the Soviet spy Xavia Nadra is still wanted for questioning by British Special Branch for breaching the conditions of her release from prison.

In 2001 a book called “A Circular Delusion” was authored by Rachel Jales and published by London River.

Brief synopsis: The author dismisses mathematics as a tool for describing reality, instead suggesting that numbers are actually a weapon of control.

The publisher was unwilling to reveal contact details for the author.

Claiming to be a technical writer, we asked the publisher to pass our details on to the author, implying that we

would like an interview for a 'distributed article' that we would sell to other magazines, sharing the proceeds with them; leaving a proxy e-mail address and telephone number; a world wide web page also exists should the author or publisher be curious.

The world wide web server has been probed several times, whoever-they-are, downloading everything from the web server, using Internet Protocol addresses allocated to a university in Australia.

Many online articles have apparently been penned by Rachel Jales but significantly there are no videos or pictures of her.

A theory is developing that Rachel Jales has transformed into an Ernesto 'Che' Guevara like figure, becoming a revolutionary icon.

Rachel Jales also known as Nicola Cook, is fifty four years old (2007) and it would be very convenient for her if she was believed to be dead; we do not.

We do believe she is responsible for the deaths of all four members of the Red Garnet collective and that she has information that could expose a Russian spy

network operating within NATO.

– End of line

[END NOTES]

Re-examining the frequency of edits verifies that Rachel Jales has been an active target for over twenty years; a level of resource expenditure generally reserved for terrorist groups, war criminals and treason.

When Flamenca reveals Reed Clarke's connections, he will be incarcerated and probably tortured by British Intelligence, using what is left of his broken mind and body as spy-trap-bait.

CHAPTER 12

A large red brick building in Manchester that was once a canal port warehouse for loading and unloading everything from livestock to Gin via river boat, is now a sympathetically modernised castle, leased to various ministries of intelligence including Special Branch.

Six inboxes, six identical e-mail messages:

DATA POINT

[MESSAGE]

Nicola Cook :: box id: 502, Reed Clarke :: box id: 2457733

Dear Sir / madam,

We consider our findings to require your urgent attention.

Please find below an initial analysis of person known as Reed Clarke :: box id: 2457733

There is a connection between Mr Clarke and Nicola Cook @ Rachel Jales, box id: 502

Both Mr Clarke and Miss Cook have occupied the same residential address possibly at the same time.

Because of this connection Reed Clarke may be associated with and allied to the Russian Federation.

It is possible that Reed Clarke is in contact with Nicola Cook @ Rachel Jales.

Yours faithfully

Henge

[END MESSAGE]

2008 January 14, Monday.

02:15

Riverside Supermarket car park, a black Audi waits.

Clutching a Guardian news paper under an arm pit, Reed retrieves car keys from a trouser pocket and unlocks his vehicle from a distance.

Opening his driver’s side door Reed appears not to notice the black car parked behind him, their engine just started.

Purchases dropped onto his front passenger seat, he pulls a seatbelt over a shoulder and starts his own engine, whilst watching the vehicle behind via a wing mirror, forced to squint as their blazing headlights ignite.

Neither car moves.

Reed releases his seatbelt and turns off his engine; his

cab’s interior still lit as if daytime, illuminated by a tinted windowed black Audi parked behind.

Picking up his news paper he spreads it out across his dashboard taking advantage of these excellent reading conditions, turning pages slowly, leaning forward to get a closer look, but unwilling to oblige with improving Reed’s knowledge of world events, headlights from behind also go out; and so now in relative darkness Reed folds up his paper, drags himself over to the passenger side car seat, reclines it and grapples with a blanket from the rear.

Reclined with eyes closed, his somewhat confused body clock gently projects fleeting visions of shiny cars and helicopters into his subconscious while an occasional thud from vehicle doors and rattlings of shopping trolleys create an external ambience of a busy but harmless nocturnal human activity.

Four doors open and four people step out, approaching in close formation, peering through Reed Clarke’s car windows.

Exchanging glances, a female standing closest to Reed raps her knuckles against glass but alas without

response, so she speaks loudly, “Excuse me!”.

Still, Reed is motionless.

Reaching into her coat pocket, an A6 sized wallet is unfolded and pressed against Reeds window which unsurprisingly also fails to stir anyone.

With her badge of authority pushed against Reed’s car she raises an eyebrow at a colleague who nods and holds up a separate key fob.

Car locks clunk and doors are immediately yanked open which does wake Reed, jolting him into an upright position, bleary-eyed.

“Mr Reed Clarke?”

Looking up at someone staring down at him, Reed says nothing, possibly upsetting this rather intimidating woman because she proceeds to pull Reed’s red blanket off of him, dropping it onto the wet ground, before stating, “Sir, we believe you to be Reed Clarke. As such I am authorised to arrest you under Section forty one of the Terrorism Act two thousand, due to suspicion of preparation or instigation of acts of

terrorism. Please get out of the vehicle and put your hands in front of you," then after pausing thoughtfully, "We are armed."

Reed takes a deep breath, exhaling slowly before pulling himself out of his car, arms out stretched and visibly shaking as handcuffs are clamped around wrists.

As if bridled he is lead by his restraints and encouraged to sit on comfortable Audi rear upholstery facing a cage partition that is welded to roll bars.

Two women take their places up front, reverse the Audi and begin leaving this car park; and as Reed is driven away he can see that people are examining his own vehicle, with all doors, boot and bonnet open, whilst a large recovery lorry beeps and manoeuvres.

A long journey.

At least twice Reed falls asleep without interruption, the passenger side woman occasionally turning around to look at him but that is all, no words and no comms chatter.

During wakeful periods Reed pays good attention to

road signage, watching for reflective green cats eyes passing underneath, signifying a direction change.

They cross into Wales via Shropshire, their route remarkably clear of other vehicles, sometimes driving on main roads and other times squeezing through narrow tracks but he believes his destination to be close now, lest they are heading into the Irish Sea.

Tall evergreen trees and shrubs almost hide a spiked metal fence guarding a pitch black night time void but if there are gates, they are opened and well hidden.

Gravel crunches under tyres, moths and debris flicker through powerful headlight beams and slowing to a crawl two white posts come into view, one either side of this track.

Passenger side woman exits the Audi and approaches a white post, making some gesticulations, perhaps swiping a key card.

Green LEDs spark into life, hanging in trees like luminous fruit.

Without waiting for her colleague, the driver continues

forwards at a crawl, turning a corner, activating external motion detecting lamps that reveal a modern four storey domestic building with a very large drive way where this vehicle inevitably comes to a halt.

The woman on foot walks up to the house and possibly presses a button or says something, it is not clear, but without waiting for an answer she returns, pulls open a rear car door and shakes Reed by his shoulder.

Snorting unintelligible words, Reed jolts back into semi consciousness.

“Please get out.”

“I really need a pee.”

“Follow me please.”

Grabbing his handcuffs she leads Reed across gravel to the front door which is slightly ajar but using more contactless hand movements the gap increases just enough to allow her to sidestep into the house with Reed in tow.

An unusual lobby with recessed ceiling lights, granite

tiled flooring and walls decorated with cream-grey geometric shapes intertwined with flowers and leaves; it has two doors and a staircase.

Door number one softly clicks shut.

Pointing at door number two, the woman says, “Toilet. There are no locks or windows.”

Reed looks at his handcuffs, rubs his eyes with wrists bound but says nothing and approaching the toilet he can see that there is a gap; this door is mounted at least twenty centimetres above the floor.

Inside, bars are fixed to mildew covered walls, probably used for restraint, a conclusion drawn by the fact that thick buckled straps and other metal shackles hang from them.

A stench akin to diesel.

Displaced taps stand atop plumbing, no sinks and importantly no toilet bowl, just a drain which Reed contemplates using but his bladder refuses to comply.

Outside of this so called toilet, the woman has gone.

He takes slow steps towards the front door but finds there is no way to open it, his only exit now is a stair case leading upwards.

There are no lights and it becomes a tad more dark with every step that he climbs; and upstairs is not what he expected.

An open plan floor with desks, chairs and computers, a room lit only from light reflected by those still burning exterior lamps from all around this building, and he is alone.

Another door on a far wall appears to have a large handle, however, a wave of fatigue, thirst and giddiness washes over him; so swivelling a wheeled chair out from under the closest desk, Reed drops his backside into it, habitually reaching for a computer mouse with both wrists still handcuffed.

Monochrome orange text wrapped in rectangles of various sizes fill all of this display but no matter how hard he tries to read what is written it just appears to be gobbledygook, paragraphs composed of letters and symbols that surely spell nothing except for the words

Reed Clarke that are scattered about.

He mumbles, “Base sixty four?”

Moving his hands over a keyboard, he stops, interrupted by thudding vibrations apparently coming from behind that other door, resonating through the floor, desks and his chair.

Some seconds of silence precede an enormous crash and as if changing channels, Reed is ejected from his dream, returning him to a twenty four hour supermarket car park, looking out of a windscreen at a shopping trolley that has just bounced off of his front bumper.

Conjuring all possible haste Reed flings open his passenger side door and clutching his blanket, steps out on to solid ground, disorientated but blissfully liberated, his unconscious nightmare rapidly slithering away.

Cold air and grey clouds, their edges illuminated by a lunar shard.

Throwing the blanket through his open car door, he locks up and speed walks, shunting the loose trolley into a designated bay as he makes a beeline for

supermarket lavatories.

03:45

Lymington quay, Hampshire.

Moon light, a breeze ripples reflections over calm harbour waters.

Bitterly cold sea air fogs breath from two volunteer Special Police Officers standing at a locked metal gate which thumps, squeaking open slowly after a sequence of numbers are tapped into a brightly lit blue keypad.

A wide aluminium walkway leads out to boats of all sizes, some double-moored but all anchored and dark.

Quietly closing the gate behind them, they walk an incline, one behind the other, turning left along a pathway of buoyant slabs.

An LED torch confirms a boat's insignia before one of them climbs on board and heads to its stern, returning minutes later with three black sports holdalls all curiously swaddled in heavy duty adhesive tape.

Handing bags off to his colleague both men silently leave.

03:35, Riverside Supermarket, Berkshire.

Shaking his hands after an ineffective public toilet blow dryer, Reed casually returns to his parking spot, happy to see that there is nothing parked behind it.

With clean hands about to get dirty, he carefully strokes tyre treads, feeling for screws, spikes and empty glass bottles pushed tightly against them, because punctured tyres are simple to instigate but mighty inconvenient.

All clear.

Reed drives his vehicle around this same car park to a different parking space within a congregation of other stationary vehicles; his movements recorded by video cameras situated on top of tall polls and from inside a stealthy helicopter that is circling a half mile away.

CHAPTER 13

2008 January 14, Monday.

DATA POINT

08:45

An email without text but an attached file, an image, a cartoon cat with a cartoon caption that says something about wanting a cheese burger.

Getting up from his desk and with a cup of tea in his hand, Reed leaves this storage unit, lifting and pulling its large metal roller door, making every effort to be as quiet as possible without spilling his drink.

Liberated outside, away from that stuffy atmosphere of odorous antique mould, vans of various sizes and colours are parked with their rear doors open, whilst people push sack barrows and long two-wheeled trolleys, to and fro.

There is a corner of these commercial grounds that would otherwise be extra parking spaces but instead is a high curbed concrete triangle that surrounds a four foot tall decrepit brick wall which according to a corroded green brass plaque, is what remains of a seventeenth century town hall, where once all sorts of interesting and important things were decreed, but now it is just a convenient seat for Reed to park his arse when he wants a tea break.

On his perch Reed is unnoticed, becoming an invisible addition to these bland and ancient bricks whilst busy customers carry boxes, slam doors, start engines and shout into mobile telephones, moving and storing stuff with sentimental value that otherwise would be cheaper to scrap and buy new.

Looking up, Reed imagines looking down, like a spirit, unaffected by weather or temperature, able to occupy a space of his own, above everything and everyone else, where he would not be trespassing or interfered with.

Always peculiar and beyond his control, tears run down his cheeks, as if that spirit has taken possession; a sad soul whom Reed wants to hold and comfort.

An unbelievable state of affairs, that he could somehow tread on toes by pointing binoculars skyward; and the bleakness of his situation and imminent danger is only emphasised by the arrival of that email.

Leaning forward he stands up, wincing from backache, taking a slow walk toward his cold and dark storage unit where an electronic message waits faithfully, one which he has no desire to decipher but unfortunately can not

ignore, that is, if he would like assistance avoiding a prison cell.

Sitting back at his desk, Reed taps his keyboard causing a screensaver password prompt to appear, dismissing it rapidly with a blur of typed characters.

A large beige and boxy Cathode Ray Tube computer monitor on Reed's right displays a Thunderbird email client from which he saves an attached file to hard disk.

Moving his mouse cursor down, an application panel automatically slides up, enabling him to select:

Graphics > GNU Image Manipulation Program

GIMP spreads itself out across the top of this screen allowing him to load, display and interrogate his newly saved cartoon cat.

From GIMP, Reed clicks:

Image > Metadata > Edit Metadata

A stack of empty text areas are packed together under a *Description* tab but only one has anything written inside

of it, a couple of lines of gobbledygook.

[TEXT]

9>"8E9TIH;4L\;FU))CDI+4)A-3)4-S8_"@``
`
[END TEXT]

He pastes this gibberish into emacs, surrounding it with extra words of his own and saves the lot as a new file.

[TEXT (bar.txt)]

begin 664 foo.txt
9>"8E9TIH;4L\;FU))CDI+4)A-3)4-S8_"@``
`
end

[END TEXT (bar.txt)]

Now to decode it; he types the following command line into an Xterm:

uudecode bar.txt; cat foo.txt

and presses Enter.

[OUTPUT]

x&%gJhmK<nmI&9)-Ba52T76?

[END OUTPUT]

More gobbledegook.

He drags his mouse cursor over this new line of random characters while holding down the left mouse button, highlighting it, and then, in the same Xterm he types:

tail -f /var/log/apache2/access.log | grep -i

and pressing his middle mouse button down at the end of that line, what he has just scraped is appended.

tail -f /var/log/apache2/access.log | grep -i "x&%gJhmK<nmI&9)-Ba52T76?"

After adding quotation marks he presses the Enter key again.

Nothing appears to happen and without obvious concern he gets up from his chair, walks over to his kettle and

reheats whatever water remains, dropping a fresh tea bag and sweetened soya milk into his empty cup.

Staring at the stack of GNU/Linux computers, he recalls the effort it took to convince his Internet Service Provider that he needs a static IP address, one that is consistent and unchanging for as long as he has a contract with them.

“But why?”, became their support staff’s mantra.

“I need to give people remote access to files on a web server in my office.”

An adequate excuse, because his ISP relented; and so, at extra cost, he has an unchanging, static Internet Protocol address.

That little grey hub supplied by his ISP, like most hubs, has the facility for opening ports and allowing those on the outside, access to computers on the inside, in this case access to computers here, inside Reed Clarke’s storage unit.

Port eighty.

If a web browser is pointed at Reed's static IP address it will automatically connect to his web server and display whatever web pages exist on it; but it is a ruse.

Reed's web server, connectable via port eighty, keeps logs, recording everything about those who connect, times, dates, IP addresses but also a string of text, normally used to broadcast a web browser's brand name.

What if someone wanted to push a message onto a web server's pile of log entries, a real message, a communication.

Web server log files can be massive and very busy, so a special log file entry would need to be uniquely identifiable and broadcast periodically, rather like Morse code.

Just a few computer instructions can remotely insert communication text into any web server's log files and this is what Reed Clarke's web server is being used for, a relatively secure message receiving system, where 'secure' assumes that those transmitting messages are using a Virtual Private Network (VPN).

DATA POINT

Reed’s sleepy command line:

tail -f /var/log/apache2/access.log | grep -i “x&%gJhmK<nmI&9)-Ba52T76?”

is watching for a web server log entry that contains the text:

x&%gJhmK<nmI&9)-Ba52T76?

at which point it will be displayed on his screen.

Tea bag and soya milk foam as hot water is poured onto them.

Wandering back to his desk, text has appeared, looking like any other web server log entry but for this:

[TEXT]

… x&%gJhmK<nmI&9)-Ba52T76? 9>"8E9TIH;4L\;FU))CDI+4)A-3)4-S8_"@`` x&%gJhmK<nmI&9)-Ba52T76? ...

[END TEXT]

Reed creates and saves another text file as follows:

[TEXT FILE (mfoo.txt)]

begin 664 mbar.txt
9>"8E9TIH;4L\;FU))CDI+4)A-3)4-S8_"@``
`
end

[END TEXT FILE (mfoo.txt)]

and then types:

uudecode mfoo.txt; cat mbar.txt

Pressing Enter again, produces the following decoded output:

[OUTPUT]

52.728777819917184, -4.057031472259466

[END OUTPUT]

Time to undertake a journey but where to?

From the computer screen on his left, he opens a new web browser tab which helpfully displays a search engine home page and clicking the *Maps* link he pastes those coordinates.

[MAP DESCRIPTION]

Barmouth, a seaside town lying on the estuary of the Afon Mawddach and Cardigan Bay.

[END MAP DESCRIPTION]

He will leave immediately, once he has finished his tea, visited the toilet, brushed his teeth, printed off some A4 maps for directions, filled a flask with hot water, packed a few bags with clean clothes, toiletries and food and backed up software projects and documentation to a collection of well used memory sticks and external hard drives.

CHAPTER 14

Gore Road, New Milton; a police car stops outside a terraced house that is surrounded by a tall brown wooden fence; one of the few remaining Council owned properties in Hampshire.

Exiting their vehicle, a Special Constable reaches over and unlatches an entrance gate, swinging it open whilst his colleague lifts three large bags out of their police vehicle's boot, carrying them through a side alley to where his fellow pseudo copper has already opened a shed door.

Amongst the filth is a rusty chest freezer with its lid already open; a stench of cat and rodent urine forces this drug carrying mule to wince before dropping all three tape clad bags into it, slamming the lid firmly shut.

It takes them three minutes, their progress monitored from an open bedroom window above a detritus filled front entrance of this scruffy brothel, by a man with an addict's complexion who also holds a mobile device to his ear.

Leaving as quickly as they arrived, the police car revs loudly and disappears amongst Gore Road's traffic flow.

18:45

Reed has fallen asleep again whilst sitting in his chair.

A fleeting blow of cold air ruffles Reed’s fringe but fails to mess up several sheets of A4 pages laying on his desk, printed maps marked with luminous crosses, highlighting way points and junctions, whilst a notepad listing road numbers and town names acts as a paperweight.

A small wooden box lined with felt-like fabric, is open, its lid located beside it, but inside are three memory sticks, a portable hard drive and some cabling.

Holdalls on the floor next to an open suitcase have various garments stuffed inside and a toilet bag is unzipped.

Sealed plastic containers packed with various breakfast cereal have been placed near an open thermos flask and a now cold kettle of water.

Litre boxes of soya milk and two-litre bottles of drinking water are stacked together on the floor.

E-waste salvaged and repaired, mice, keyboards and Zip drives, rest inside shelved plastic red boxes, and a chorus of humming computers harmonise a sleep-bringing melody for their friend and keeper Reed Clarke;

being as how, this could be the last time they enjoy each others' company.

Something above lands heavily and squawks before its avian feet trot across a flat corrugated metal roof.

With eyes still closed, Reed lifts his arms above his head for a few seconds and then rubs the small of his back; he has been hunched in this chair for at least two and a half hours but though his body refuses any attempts at quick movements, he defiantly pushes on, resuming where he left off.

Flicking his kettle's switch, he kneels, zipping up various unzipped bags.

Scanning shelving, he zeros in on two large empty plastic storage boxes, one inside the other and after dusting both with cleaning solution and a cloth he fills them, arranging containers of breakfast cereal and soya milk inside one and stowing maps, a wooden box, notepad, several pens, two mobile devices and more cabling inside the other.

Unlocking screens, he checks camera feeds for activity outside his unit but motion activated strip lights are dark;

so he pulls and pushes his noisy metal roller door upwards and disappears into a maze of corridors, returning moments later, steering a squeaky two wheeled trolley.

With his unit door still open, he begins placing items onto the cart, his bags, boxes and bottled water, finally wheeling the lot outside and down a slope towards his car.

A Trolley jack, wheel brace and a collapsible vegetable crate already occupy Reed’s boot but there is still enough space for his holdalls.

Before loading his baggage, Reed pulls the vegetable crate closer; inside are socks of different colours, each filled with things, giving them an appearance of plump caterpillars.

Shaking a green sock causes a pair of scissors and three reels of electrical tape to drop out; white, yellow and black.

He cuts two short strips of yellow electrical tape and one strip from the black reel, gently and temporarily tacking them to his bumper.

Using the trolley as a seat, Reed carefully places two yellow pieces of tape down the centre of a letter en, the second alphanumeric character shown on his yellow rear number plate and then connects the remaining two vertical black bars, across their middle with a black strip of tape, transforming an en into an aitch, smoothing it all out with his thumb.

Walking around to the front of his car, he repeats this process but with white and a black strip of electrical tape, applying them to his white front number plate.

Refilling the sock and pushing the vegetable crate back into place, bags and bottles are also squeezed into his boot but boxes, he puts on the back seat, using his blanket to cover them.

From the passenger side of his car, Reed opens a dashboard compartment, rummages around for a few seconds before extracting two items, a compass and a small black box, similar in size to a pack of cigarettes but with a thick four inch aerial and the words “RF Detector” printed on its front; he sticks both objects to his dashboard using blobs of putty-like adhesive.

Then with a crash he shoves the long two wheeled trolley into an alcove and heads back to his storage unit for a final check.

With the Roller door wide open, Reed fills his thermos flask with hot water, replaces the kettle and puts the flask and his toilet bag near the exit, ready to go.

Switching off three computer monitors, he steps closer to his tall rack of GNU/Linux machines and speaks quietly, “I need you to keep running for as long as possible please.”

After a final look around, he switches off his desk lamp, picks up the toilet bag and flask and pulls down his unit’s shutter door, sealing it with a pad lock.

Now in darkness, tiny shards of light leak through wall cracks whilst Reed’s GNU/Linux machines, with their flickering indicators, faithfully await remote instructions.

CHAPTER 15

2008 January 14, Monday.

22:45

Church Stretton, Shropshire.

Motorways avoided, a hundred and fifty miles travelled but still only halfway there; just a few minutes sleep should do.

A small supermarket car park is almost empty and a good place for forty winks; however a sudden sense of unmolested freedom overrides Reed's weariness so he steps outside.

Breathing deeply with eyes closed Reed samples the almost still Shropshire aura which is only slightly tainted by an aroma of damp tarmac and adult laughter from a nearby pub.

A public convenience at the bottom of this road is a welcome sight.

Pressing a button on his key fob, door locks clunk and orange indicator lights flash; time enough to stretch his legs and absorb these hushed and calm surroundings so he walks.

Passing occasional stubbornly flashing Christmas lights,

a red Royal Mail postbox stands proud, its white timetable indicating that nine o'clock tomorrow morning will be its next collection.

He arrives at what appears to be a main street and there is a sign with an arrow and a single word, "Station", so he walks.

From a bridge that spans both sides of the tracks, Reed looks down over this well lit terminal which is completely open to the elements, yet beautifully maintained with small gardens and sculptures.

In both directions rails extend, disappearing into misty and distant dark voids.

Very quiet, indeed so quiet that the whisper of tyres rolling into this station's parking area can be heard, though they have already been preceded by head lights that disrupt Reed's moment of solitude.

A car door slams, followed by telltale treble squeaks and mutterings of an approaching police radio.

Foot steps climb the bridge and a distorted human silhouette approaches, their body wrapped with armour

and equipment.

“Good evening.”

“Hello.”

“Are you waiting for a train?”

“No, I’ve been driving for a few hours so I’m stretching my legs.”

“Are you delivering?”

“No, I’ve parked my car by the public toilets, near the shop.”

“Do you have any identification.”

From his wallet Reed hands over his driver’s license.

“Are you familiar with this area, have you been here before?”

“No.”

“Where are your car keys?”

Reaching into his pocket Reed shows the officer a black key fob.

“A Peugeot?”

“Yes.”

“What’s your car’s registration number?”

Reed nervously pauses, worried that his number plate no longer reads as it should; but this officer appears to misinterpret Reed’s body language because, somewhat impatiently, he gives yet another order, “I am going to do a body search. Take your coat off and raise your arms please.”

Without hesitation Reed complies.

The officer pats him down, running his hands down the inside and outside of his legs, “Take your shoes off please.”

Again Reed complies, standing on a wet bridge wearing socks.

“Take your socks off.”

The officer squeezes and shakes them both before politely handing them back, “Thank you, you can put those all back on. Do you smoke?”

“No.”

“Have you consumed alcohol today?”

“No.”

“Would you mind taking an alcohol breath test?”

“No I don’t mind.”

“This way please. After you.”

Reed is followed down the steps and lead out of the station to where a small white police car, with its headlights switched on, is parked.

The police officer opens a rear door and orders Reed, “Sit there.”

A dashboard cluttered with technology glows orange,

whilst speakers splutter chirping noises and from his car boot this armoured-tool-belt wearing copper fiddles with thin blue rubber gloves, whilst retrieving another gadget, one with a tube hanging from it.

Standing in the road he points the pipe at Reed's face, "Take a deep breath and blow until I say stop."

After twenty seconds the officer withdraws the pipe and presses some buttons.

"All good. You say you don't smoke so a drugs test should come back negative. I'm going to take a swab of your tongue."

Discarding his tubed contraption through an open driver's side window, he pulls a plastic container out from one of his many stab vest pockets, unclips the top and conjures a long stick with a cotton bud.

"Open your mouth."

The foul tasting thing is rubbed inside of Reed's mouth before it is slid back from where it came, lid clicked shut.

With a pen the officer scribbles along the tube's length

and without looking at Reed, asks, “What is your destination?”

“Wales.”

“Whereabouts in Wales.”

“Barmouth.”

“Do you have family there?”

“A friend of the family.”

“What’s their address?”

“They are going to meet me in the town centre.”

“You don’t know their address?”

“No.”

With a cynical grin the cop asks, “You have an uncle in Wales but you don’t know their address?”

“It’s not an Uncle, it’s a friend of the family.”

“What if you don’t find them?”

“Barmouth is quite small and I hope they are going to find me.”

“Do you have a mobile phone?”

Reed says nothing but feels inside his coat for where he thought his mobile telephone was, “It was in here.”

Opening another pocket on his stab vest the cop says, “Is this it?”

Silence.

Switching Reed’s telephone on the cop begins navigating through menus, eventually looking up, “You don’t seem to have any messages.”

More navigating, “Or contacts.”; and for a minute or two the cop is quiet whilst he continues interrogating the contents of Reed’s mobile telephone.

“Here we go; so you do receive calls judging from the log.”

“I prefer not to make telephone calls from my mobile because it’s too expensive.”

The officer hands back Reed’s device.

“You can go.”

“Can I have my car key and driver’s license back please.”

The cop smiles, “Oh yes.”

Reed shuts the rear door of the police car and strolls back to the bridge, climbing it slowly, resuming his place looking down on railway tracks, paying no attention to the police vehicle as it reverses and leaves.

Assuming that a camera has exposed his location, he continues to stare at the ground below for as long as he can bare, eventually succumbing to irritated impatience, briskly walking back to his own car.

Locating an addressed and stamped A5 padded envelope from his messenger bag, and with his mobile telephone still switched on, Reed drops it inside, peeling off a white paper strip to seal the parcel.

DATA POINT

Locking his seat belt, Reed slowly reverses and leaves the car park, allowing his vehicle to gently roll down and around the road, stopping beside the postbox, into which he drops the light brown parcel containing his mobile telephone.

If his device is being tracked then triangulation will show that it is not moving, that is, until nine o'clock tomorrow morning when it will begin an interesting route back to Berkshire via one or more sorting offices.

Reed's tolerance of bullies has not improved but his expectation and opinion of adult people is ever in decline.

Our mask.

Human systems designed to control (they) encourage us to develop a projection of ourselves which elevates our social status through repeated consumption and carnage; but it is false and poisonous, a process which spawns flaws in our behaviour, exploitable by the state.

Our core.

That which defines you is not connected to phobias and it is not connected to addictions, it is not jealous and it is not angry, it is not happy and it is not sad, its pace is sufficient, it consumes enough, it ignores conformity and accusations of inadequacy.

Ironic.

By not using masks to disguise our true self, we better avoid generating those signals that are used to monitor us.

A hero's journey.

False personas burrow deep, polluting rational thoughts with narcissism; but freeing ourselves from their grip requires extreme measures, an exorcism of personality, a hero’s journey.

-- A Circular Delusion by Rachel Jales

CHAPTER 16

2008 January 15, Tuesday.

DATA POINT

03:30

At four months past tourist season and with Christmas packed up for another year, Barmouth has been returned to its natives, some of whom are already awake loading and driving bicycles, boats, vans and tractors.

Reed has arrived.

Grass verges either side of an old and narrow road have ditches scooped out for flood defence; evergreen foliage and tall trees reinforce lofty stone walls and branches form an arch over a pair of enormous black ironwork gates.

There are three possible routes, ahead, back or through that gated driveway behind him.

Silhouetted against a moon lit horizon, a cyclist approaches, walking her bicycle around to Reed’s passenger side, bending down to make eye contact.

Partially opening a window, Reed greets her with, “Hello.”

“Can I have your car keys please Reed?”

“I don’t think that would be a good idea.”

“You will have driven a long way for nothing if you don’t give me your car keys.”

Whilst closing his passenger window Reed says, “No thank you. Good bye.”

She walks to the rear, circling back around to where Reed is sitting and speaks loudly, “We estimate that you’ve a week at most before they lock you up,” then gesturing towards his car, “And the longer you sit here the more problematic you become for us.”

Silence, as they both just stare at each other, Reed inside his locked car and her outside.

“Get out of the fucking car and give me the fucking keys.”

“Go away.”

Finally the woman shrugs and walks her bicycle back the way she came; the little red light underneath her

saddle glaringly bright, flashing and changing its colour from red to orange.

Concussive thuds and loud beeping, yank Reed back into wakeful reality, just as a silhouetted woman climbs out of a flatbed recovery lorry, its orange lights pulsating and rear red lenses glowing, whilst an exhaust flumps deeply in time with a loud, tapping engine.

After kneeling in front of Reed's car for a few seconds the lady stands, approaches and slaps electrical tape, just peeled from his front number plate onto his windscreen, then leaning in she speaks to him through partially opened glass, "Did I wake you up? Sorry."

"Not a problem."

"We need to get you and your car off of this road, okay?"

Then pulling two ramps out from underneath her lorry, she allows them to bounce loudly on the road, and climbing up one of them, she traverses her trucks flatbed, dragging a thick yellow cable back down with her, quickly attaching it to the front of Reed's vehicle.

"Can you let the hand brake off please."

A surreal moment of not knowing whether he is awake or still dreaming; Reed releases his hand brake.

The boiler-suited lorry driver clasps a thickly wired control box and presses a button, which rocks Reed and his car forwards.

“Turn right slightly,” the lorry driver shouts.

Ramps whine as his Peugeot is dragged across them.

“Good. You can get out now. Stand clear.”

The crisp Welsh winter is quick to assert itself when Reed opens his door but snatching items from his dashboard he steps out of the way, watching as his car and home are seized.

Slotting the control box back into its cubbyhole she nimbly leaps up and with some more fiddling and banging, clamps the Peugeot’s wheels.

“Lets go.”

His hands are shaking as he climbs into the cab and the

driver notices, “There are glucose drinks in that box behind ya, they’ve got caffeine, but they might help.”

An odd experience for Reed, a stranger being polite, not the usual bombardment of threats and harassment.

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome. Ten minutes and we’ll be there.”

CHAPTER 17

2008 January 15, Tuesday.

04:15

Turning right onto a narrow beaten track with ditches and trees on either side, they bump and rattle until powerful headlight beams reveal a chained and padlocked wooden gate blocking their way.

“This is where you get out.”

Reed looks at his driver.

“Go through them trees, just a few yards to the next

field, walk across it. You'll see some buildings, farm like, that's where ya need to be."

"What are you going to do with my car?"

"They'll explain."

"Who will?"

"I can't tell you anyfin I'm afraid."

Reed closes his eyes and rubs his forehead.

The driver continues, "I ain't told anyfin but I suspect you're important to 'em, otherwise they wouldn't 'ave chanced making contact wi-ya."

Reed opens the door.

The driver points with her left hand, "Twen'y minutes that way. Trees, field, farm. Tread careful through them trees. I'll sit here for a minute, me lights 'll 'elp."

Reed gets out, closes the door and without looking back begins walking.

The ground under trees is soft, sticks and twigs crack, thorned undergrowth and low branches cling to his clothes, face and hair; but not for long because he quickly finds his way through, stepping into an open field.

Distant head lights from behind recede, accompanied by the dull rumble of a diesel engine in reverse and high pitched warning beeps that eventually fall silent.

Mud, no crops just mud, recently ploughed, lines of turned soil that lead the way; so he walks.

Shoes and socks absolutely smothered, he eventually reaches the other side of this field of turned soil and a metal gate from where distant dark buildings are visible against a quarter moonlit sky.

A long vertical gate handle scrapes a metal bolt clear from an adjacent fence and with a squelch, Reed drags his dirt caked feet onto slightly firmer grassy ground, a paddock.

The beauty of an unpolluted Welsh night sky is not lost on Reed but his eyes are drawn to low stone walls a short distance away, that perhaps form a perimeter

around the compound which is his destination; and from where Reed stands the obvious way in, is up and over.

Thick stone walls and muddy shoes prove to be no match for Reed's tenacity and in short order he is on top, standing, surveying his surroundings.

An outline of Welsh gable roofed architecture form a grey skyline but Reed also notices there is an absence of equipment, trailers, tractors and bails, and if there were any guard dogs, then they probably would have let Reed know by now.

On top of the wall Reed begins walking the boundary, minding his footing, looking for an obvious entrance.

From his pocket he switches on his RF Detector; if modern wireless technologies are in use here, Reed will be able to home in.

Releasing the squelch, a green light bleeds into yellow.

With a crunch he clambers down onto a bare and hard gravelled ground.

Yellow bleeds into red, the signal's intensity increasing

with every step he takes closer to the house directly in front.

Wet gravel under foot, wind through trees and squelch at maximum, his detector’s lights are permanently red.

A building and a door with a keypad.

For want of a better idea, Reed taps the same sequence he has been using for years, the one that gives him access to his storage unit, and with a ka-chunk, he pulls the door open.

A hallway.

His fingers find a switch that activates many lights, including a lamp situated on a thin table.

With butterflies and dragonflies painted on the lamp’s base, a stained glass lampshade projects floral patterns onto walls and the ceiling, and Reed is stunned.

As a child he would pretend to be a dragonfly swooping through the colourful light when he visited aunty Nicky’s house, the residence that he eventually shared after his parents divorced.

Nothing could have given Reed a greater sensation of security at that moment than this lamp, and for once his fatigue proves useful by dulling expressions of emotion that would otherwise overwhelm; actually all he can think about is finding a chair to sit in and if possible a cup of tea, but suddenly remembers that his bloody flask is in his car.

A door on the right is ajar so he pushes it, revealing a clean toilet and sink, towels on a rail and various cleaning solutions stacked together on the floor but this room is windowless.

Ahead, through the hallway is a large kitchen area with surfaces, sinks and cupboards built against every wall but he quickly spots all necessary equipment required for making a pot of tea, now he just needs to find some ingredients.

Two upright fridges stand side by side and god bless, there are unopened bottles of milk slotted inside one of the doors.

Filling a kettle and automatically reaching for a nearby jar of tea bags, a tea pot is ready and waiting to be filled

with boiled water.

A kitchen island has two high wooden stools but before he can consider sitting down, his bladder and bowels send signals for attention, and the more he tries to hang on for the kettle to boil the stronger the urgency, so he heads back to the hallway lavatory.

CHAPTER 18

2008 January 15, Tuesday.

5:00

Lavatory extractor fan whirring, Reed returns to the kitchen wiping damp hands on jeans.

Hot water in the teapot, mug from a cupboard, he adds milk and finally makes that which he desires, a cup of tea, and it is exquisite.

Sitting on a stool and swivelling around Reed absorbs his surroundings, cupboards, drawers, a microwave oven, etcetera; conclusion: a well equipped kitchen but oddly, like the toilet, windowless.

Far right, behind him, is what appears to be the back door, a heavy wooden thing made from planks that is secured by an iron latch, so with tea in hand he decides to investigate.

Gripping a handle, he releases the latch with his thumb, allowing the door to gently drift open, silently away from him, bumping on a rubber door stop; but instead of a brisk winter wind Reed is confronted by another hallway with magnolia walls and recessed ceiling lights that reflect off a polished granite slab flooring.

There is yet another door straight ahead but to his right is a wide staircase with banisters going up.

Tea in one hand and a banister in the other, steps creak as Reed slowly climbs to a landing where a stone archway awaits on his left; no door but three light switches, and clicking one reveals a large open area beyond.

Nine desks, three rows of three are arranged on grey carpet tiles, closed opaque blinds hang inside window recesses and at a far wall to his right is yet another closed wooden door.

Dirty footprints betray Reed’s path, and now sitting on the top step he looks down at his filthy shoes, socks, jeans, and rubbing his chin, the poor state of his personal grooming situation, is only compounded.

If this was his storage unit, he would dispense hot water over himself whilst standing inside something deep, but surely there are better options here.

He descends the stairs.

To his left is the kitchen, to the right is a closed wooden door that will require both hands to open, so taking a mouthful of tea he puts the cup down on the stone floor and then lifting the door’s iron lever he pulls on a handle but without effect, he pushes but it seems to be wedged.

There are two heavy bolts top and bottom.

Releasing them he tries again and it opens outward, wind grabbing the door like a sail, almost ripping the handle from his hand but he keeps a grip, stumbling, dragged outside into a fresh Welsh winter morning.

Sky still dark but alluding to daybreak, a small wall light brings into view two wooden picnic benches and some

dustbins, silver and metal with lids.

Dark structures rise in all directions.

Picking up his tea and latching the back door closed, he advances towards the building opposite; another door and another keypad, but like a skeleton key, his magic four digit number gains him entrance again.

An unmistakable fragrance of a laundrette, and a single light switch illuminates a spacious utility room with washing machines, ironing boards, coat stands, brooms, buckets, Wellington boots, wardrobes, shelving, cupboards, more sinks, stacked plastic chairs and washing lines hung high; and it is warm.

There are wooden rafters overhead and a door at the far wall; he impatiently trots over and opens it, groping for another light switch.

Bunk beds, two rows of three that sleep twelve, each berth with a mattress and pillow, but further down the barn is what Reed is looking for: showers, communal but who cares; now he just needs a towel and some soap if possible, but again, who cares.

He quickly makes his way back to the utility room and begins opening cupboards and wardrobes; there are clothes, fleeces, boilersuits and: towels.

Minutes later Reed is pressing chrome button taps, those self closing things and the water is fabulously hot, absolute bliss; but his post traumatic trespass instinct only allows him ten minutes before a feeling of vulnerability engulfs, but whilst drying himself the thought of putting his dirty clothes back on makes him quiver.

Towel around his waist, Reed bundles up his clobber, marches past bunk beds and begins filling a washing machine, putting the lot in, coat and all.

More treasure hunting turns up some detergent and after twiddling knobs, his washing whooshes.

Fleeces and boilersuits hang in a wardrobe; he dresses himself with one of each and after rinsing dirty shoes, he pegs them and a wet towel to a washing line.

Bare feet on cold stone, Reed trundles back into the bunk room, climbs on top of the closest bed stack and lays down with knees bent and one hand tucked under a

pillow.

CHAPTER 19

2008 January 15, Tuesday.

09:00

A troubled sleep, pains prickle beneath his ribs and the fragrance of detergent does little to calm his pounding heart as he struggles to breathe.

Sliding off of the bed, bare feet meet a cold floor and he staggers towards the lavatories.

Mirrors above white sinks reflect a stubbled and scruffy man, who’s hair is uncombed; he needs to get a handle on this situation.

Reclaiming his washing, he is impressed to discover that by chance a tumble dry option was selected, so after putting his clothes back on, he stuffs the boilersuit into the washing machine; and enjoying the warmth of his fleece, hangs his coat up in a wardrobe.

His shoes still wet, he puts on a pair of rubber boots; at

least his socks are dry.

A bright blue sky with a few wisps of cloud.

Exiting this bunk house, fresh cold Welsh air fills his lungs and the gorgeous daylight uncloaks some surprises; what he thought was an office building actually has a steeple, it is taller and longer than it seemed in the dark and all of the other buildings within eyeshot appear to have similar dimensions.

Extraordinary events.

On Reed’s fifteen birthday his adoptive parents informed him that they would be divorced imminently; but he would now have three homes to choose from, one with his adoptive mother, one with his adoptive father and one at aunty Nicky’s house.

His adoptive parents were solicitors and dedicated to their careers, working long hours, rarely having time for each other, let-alone for Reed but aunty Nicky was different, older than his parents but always available; she took him out, introduced him to people and seemed to be interested in his future so he spent a lot of time at her house.

Nicola helped Reed get a job at The Technical Services Company Ltd at the rare age of fifteen, working from a workshop filled with discarded technology, cleaning old storage tapes before they were e-wasted, and he loved it.

Though labelled as having learning difficulties by his school teachers, Reed absorbed everything about his work environment, the way things were organised and categorised, the different types of slots and cables used by computer motherboards; he was captivated by the possibilities of reactivating abandoned electrical equipment and actually making that waste work and bringing it back to life once again.

Aunty Nicky showed Reed how to build his own personal computer made from cheap e-waste and install a different type of operating system called GNU/Linux.

She said, “Using Linux is like mining magic; once you learn how to read Man pages and access Linux programs or libraries with a few simple computer instructions, then you will know what it is like to wield a wand.”

Nicola showed Reed how to control GNU/Linux services and how to transmit information between computers in novel ways, which she called: hacks

“Hacks are side-effects put to good use, forgotten froth made useful,” she told him.

Nicola gave Reed tasks to demonstrate the power of his bespoke gizmos, hardly difficult and often just exploratory; access a remote University computer and list any file names that he found.

She always supplied login credentials, user names and passwords so he never gave it a second thought; but aunty Nicky had one rule which she called: the multi-hop rule; Reed had to access his targets via at least one other computer and prove that he had done so by keeping detailed hand written logs.

At first Reed used telnet but later Nicola insisted on encrypted connectivity which would normally require uploading and configuring a key file, but she gave him a list of step-one multi-hop connections that already had access to target computers via Secure Shell.

Nicola told Reed that his logs and her lists were

valuable and, “... don’t share these details with anyone because if they fall into the wrong hands the situation will become unpredictable; so I will look after them and only you will use it.”

Nicola’s final words of wisdom were, “Sneaking around computers is great fun but doing it without permission will bring you trouble.”

One evening the police bashed down Nicola’s front door and arrested Reed, throwing him face down onto the floor, forcing his arms behind his back, handcuffing him whilst shouting abusive threats, but aunty Nicky was not at home.

Reed was kept in a prison cell and questioned for two days without legal representation; bizarre questions, constantly asking about: The Russian.

His recently divorced adoptive mother, the solicitor, met him outside of the police station after he was released without being charged, or cautioned.

At his mother’s flat he was alone again; she left early and returned late, sometimes not coming home at all; and this went on for eight days until Reed left, caught

two buses, and travelled for two hours, back to aunty Nicky's house.

Blue and white plastic Police tape still hung from bushes, caught on branches.

Ransacked, every crack and crevice of the house had been scrutinised; floor boards lifted, upholstery ripped, wall paper torn and light fittings broken.

Plug sockets hung limp like dislodged eyeballs.

The ravage did not spare his own bedroom; mattress and quilt cut to shreds, carpet lifted, floor boards broken, furniture upside down, drawers emptied and everything relating to his computers were gone.

It was the same all over and included both toilets, their seats torn off.

From his bedroom window, the garden resembled a building site, not a patch of turf or soil was unturned, mounds and holes everywhere.

Wall mounted telephone sockets hung lose but were not destroyed so using a pen knife he started screwing

things back into place.

That was seven or eight years ago, maybe ten.

He now stands outside of an astonishing steepled Welsh building but all he can think about is how huge and well stocked the kitchen is.

Opening the large wooden back door, internal hallway lights are still lit and entering the kitchen everything is where he left it; teapot and milk on the island and a teaspoon is in one of the sinks.

Returning milk, inside the fridge there are a few loaves of bread, some cheese, coleslaw, potato salad, tomatoes, dressings, containers of berries, margarine, yogurt and eggs.

The other fridge is actually a freezer with colourful plastic packets of things, stuffed in large transparent drawers.

In cupboards he finds cornflakes, muesli and porridge oats.

Bowl from a cupboard, combining oats with water, he

begins heating the mixture with a microwave oven whilst filling a kettle and preparing his tea pot for another brew.

Microwave humming and kettle gurgling, Reed has a quick look at what other things are being kept and finds cleaning materials, rubber gloves, washing up equipment, hand soaps and boxes of bits including plumbing fittings and spanners.

One cupboard has what looked like medicines but on closer inspection are actually various types of vitamins and minerals; and then the prize, two cupboards filled with all manner of toiletries including combs, men’s razors, soaps, toothpaste and toothbrushes.

He takes a box of multivitamins, a single razor, some shower and dental things and neatly places them on top of the island before using a tea towel to remove his hot porridge from the microwave.

Pouring tea, he adds milk to both his cuppa and breakfast, and crushing a multivitamin pill with a teaspoon, he stirs its fragments into his porridge.

Using a wooden serving tray, Reed carries his food, teapot, milk and cup through the hallway and out of the

back door, placing it down on one of the picnic benches outside.

It is chilly but the view of Welsh stone buildings against a blue sky is stunning.

Looking around while eating, he anticipates the arrival of others going about their business and perhaps hearing the telltale sounds of doors closing, people speaking, coughing and laughing, and then those who suddenly stop and stare at his out of place, masticating, unshaven face.

Nothing.

Today is a Tuesday and Reed should be cleaning the Masonic building, a part time job he enjoys, transforming dusty disorder; but now he will likely never return, he is hundreds of miles away and has no transport, but most disappointing is the fact that he can not explain himself to his employer, or anyone else for that matter; he could make his apologies, perhaps claim to be ill but eventually he will have to resign; the problem is the traceability of any communication he engages in.

Patience.

Finishing his breakfast and topping up his cuppa, he mutters, “I need a notepad and a pen.”

A seagull lands on the ground twitching its head, cautiously walking back and forth; and on roofs Reed can see that other gulls are also hungrily watching him.

“Where is the utility cabling I wonder?”

Placing his crockery back on the tray he returns to the kitchen where after forty five minutes Reed has done the washing up (leaving it to dry on the draining board), gathered his toiletries, revisited the bunk house, shaved, showered and everything else; but it is now time to work.

With a fresh pot of tea Reed stands at the top of the stairs looking through a stone arch into a dimly lit office and taking slow steps, he expects someone to scream with surprise as he rests the tray on the nearest desk.

The level of light in here is reminiscent of his storage unit but today he can change that, so walking from window to window he pulls on cords, rotating blinds, unleashing the Welsh morning sunshine.

A large white room.

His anticipation of tinkering with new computer systems makes him aware of how quiet it is, no humming of electrical mechanisms and it smells nice, or perhaps just not like that stinking industrial complex that he has become so accustomed to.

Big enamelled lampshades hang from brown beams that rib the ceiling, and bricks of various sizes form the walls, but as he is about to pull a chair from under a desk and sit down, that far wall door catches his attention.

Reed’s rubber booted footsteps whisper on the soft grey carpet tiles.

A heavy wooden door with an iron latch, opens smoothly towards him, exposing another staircase, tall and without banisters, each step squeaking as he climbs them.

An open plan attic, enormous, spanning the whole area of this building, cold and fresh, like outside.

There are no other exits and Reed’s boots clop on hard

flooring; windows left and right, hinged horizontally, many are open and illuminating this space, which is littered, yet neatly, with rugs, sofas and tables.

He smiles shaking his head marvelling; and all of a sudden there it is, that unmistakable whiff of warm computers, three racks, each five shelves tall, housing many pizza-box sized slabs of technology, their tiny green and orange lights gently flickering.

Against walls are rows and rows of knee height drawers that line the attic's perimeter, their surfaces covered with nothing but dust, but pulling a draw open he finds stationery, so he takes a single black pen from a box of many, and an A5 notebook.

Not sure of his orientation Reed wanders over to an open window and then another, moving a bit quicker each time.

There are no parked vehicles and that wall he climbed over, disappears out of sight, and he can see what looks like a gate; but sparking Reed’s interest are tall poles positioned here and there, without ugly black cables scratching the skyline, instead each have wireless transmitter boxes and surveillance cameras that point in

all directions.

Steps squeak and creak when he leaves the attic, heading for the desk with his teapot.

Pouring a cup and adding milk he gulps a few and after adjusting his chair he rocks closer to the desk; a black table with four objects (other than his tray): two computer screens, a keyboard and mouse.

Tapping the space bar unsurprisingly does nothing so still sitting he leans forward, folding his torso flat against his legs; there is a black tower case under his desk and reaching out Reed presses a circular concave button, and the personal computer thrums.

Sitting up, the screen on his left is displaying a dark blue box and a line of text that reads:

Decrypt hard disk

He needs a password.

Reed sits back and takes a few more mouthfuls of tea.

Next to him is another desk with its own pair of screens,

keyboard and mouse so he gets up and takes a seat there; under this desk is an identical looking personal computer so he starts that one too but it shows the same password prompt.

Seven desks remain, so on hands and knees he crawls under each, pressing power buttons.

Standing up, he walks around looking at each set of screens and at the far end of the third row, the ninth computer is not asking to be decrypted.

Recovering his tray of tea he takes a seat there; two computer screens with a plain grey background, and right clicking the mouse offers a single menu item:
Xterm

which he clicks, materialising a black command line window with just a few characters of orange text:

~$

Reed types: *whoami*

~$ john

is returned.

Typing: *uname -a*

gives a clue as to which operating system this computer is running.

~$ Linux john-pc 2.6.12-generic x86_64 GNU/Linux

He types: *ifconfig*

~$ lo: inet 127.0.0.1 netmask 255.0.0.0

meaning this is an isolated box with no network hardware or connection whatsoever, not to the Internet or any other computer.

He types: *ls -a*

to discover what files are being kept on the hard drive, and amongst the returned text, there is a directory named *stuff* which is exactly what Reed had hoped to find.

so he types: *cd stuff*

followed by: *ls -a*

Changing directory to ‘stuff’ and listing its contents, Reed is beginning to get encouraged when twenty six more directories are listed, each named after a letter of the alphabet, again just what he thought he would find.

.
..
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
~$

With the following command Reed displays the total number of files inside the directory named: A

cd A; ls -A | wc -l

which returns a number: *0*

There are no files in directory ‘A’ but that is fine, it is the number zero that interests Reed so he writes it down in his notepad: *0*

He issues a similar command for the directory called: B

cd ../B; ls -A | wc -l

but this time it takes a minute or so, eventually returning the number: *1101101*

There are over a million files in that directory but again Reed is not interested in the files, just the quantity of them.

Reed writes this new number next to the previous zero and continues using similar commands on all directories until he reaches ‘J’.

cd ../J; ls -A | wc -l

which returns: *999*

Any number not composed of zeros or ones, signals the end point; those previous eight directories, ‘A’ to ‘H’, all have file counts, that when written on a single line (as Reed has done), look like this:

0 1101101 0 1101111 0 1101110 0 1101011

He wheels his chair over to the desk next to him, yanking the opposing seat out of the way where a hard disk decryption prompt patiently waits; and so using the

keyboards number pad, he carefully types:

0 1101101 0 1101111 0 1101110 0 1101011

Each key press appearing as a blob until finally he presses Enter but a ‘Failure’ message is displayed warning Reed that he now has two attempts remaining.

He carefully enters the same binary numbers again but this time removing spaces from the leading zeros:

01101101 01101111 01101110 01101011

Again a ‘Failure’ message informs Reed that he can make one more attempt to gain access to this computer’s hard drive; so he removes all spaces:

01101101011011110110111001101011

That is better and after a few seconds there is a mouse arrow, a dull grey background and an identical single menu option which he clicks, starting another command line prompt, where he types: *hostname*

a command that reveals the name of this computer, ‘monk-7’ and when he interrogates this computer’s

network status, many blocks of text are displayed that include this:

eth0 Link encap:Ethernet addr:172.16.0.9

He has a network connection which will allow him to communicate with other computers on these premises, but he wants to know whether it is possible for him to see his beloved storage unit computers back in Berkshire, so he issues a command that returns a straight forward status message:

curl --head http://311.94.114.5

which returns:

HTTP/1.1 200 OK

All good so he tries this:

firefox http://311.94.114.5/~reed/cameras_1.html &

The famous web browser starts, displaying live video feeds from inside and outside of his self storage unit / workshop, hundreds of miles away.

CHAPTER 20

2008 January 15, Tuesday.

11:30

The remains of a burnt vehicle festers at the side of a road near the entrance to a vast Milton Keynes industrial space that is filled with identical flat roofed, plastic clad buildings.

A black Ford Transit Van, two blue Peugeot estate cars and multiple black Mercedes models, are parked outside one of these weathered blocks, its signage broken:

XHAU TS AND TYRES

Inside, an oil stained concrete floor has rows and rows of wooden pallets, stacked with colourful boxes of food and toys that form a wall, behind which are three makeshift tables built from plastic chemical drums and scaffolding planks.

In various states of disassembly, products are gently being removed from their boxes, surgically opened up and stuffed with plastic packs of dull white crystals whilst

men and women wearing disposable coveralls, masks and rubber gloves, reassemble things, putting them back into their original packaging.

A large Caucasian woman, late fifties with bleached white hair, drinks coffee and shares a red leather sofa with three stiff holdalls, each smothered in heavy duty adhesive tape; one is open, exposing what remains of the first one thousand plastic packs of dull white crystals, and laying beside the bags is a short, double barrelled shot gun.

14:30

From Milton Keynes, a few miles south on the A5, the same black Transit van and a Mercedes estate, pull into the car park of a boating lake where the only other vehicle is a white Renault Trafic; doors are opened and colourful boxes are transferred, emptying the Ford and filling the Renault.

A mile away, a police helicopter monitor’s the vehicles as they depart.

CHAPTER 21

2008 January 15, Tuesday.

13:00

Keyboard on his lap and a mouse on a couch arm rest, Reed has relocated a personal computer to the attic, using a small table and a plastic box from the utility room to balance a monitor at an agreeable height; a notepad, pen and a pot of tea are also at the ready.

Whoever allowed Reed to move in and login, knows that he will cyber a solution; hence, confident that a plan already exists somewhere, he begins his reconnaissance.

To get started and using Firefox he types:

what is my ip

An external Internet address is immediately shown along with a likely geographic location, Culin, France; not a mistake, the real internet address is probably being masked by way of either a proxy or better still a Virtual Private Network or even better, both.

He appends this information to his previous notes, and recalling what he has already discovered, drops his pen onto the notepad, right clicks, starts a new Xterm and types:

nmap -A -T4 172.16.0.0-255 > nmap_1.txt

Two hundred and fifty six local computers or possibly none, will be interrogated by nmap, dumping its findings into a text file called nmap_1.txt and hopefully reveal some useful information about the computers installed on these premises; but it will take a few minutes.

He pours more tea, stands up and strolls over for another look at the server rack; there are twenty seven computers stacked in columns of nine, each with a mind-boggling amount of cabling hanging out of their rear ends and thick blue power cables disappear through purpose built floor apertures.

At the front, each computer has a DVD drive but no other markings beyond the manufacturer’s trade mark and tapping a button of a DVD tray, it buzzes momentarily before quietly sliding open, empty, and with a gentle push, the tray slides back into place.

This attic is quite cool, with windows open, but a waft of warm computer-heated exhaust and sunshine reflecting off of steam rising from his cup creates a flavour of calm, reminiscent of sitting on an ancient wall which stands in a dark corner of Reading, and for no good reason, Reed suddenly finds himself missing it.

Tea in hand and wandering the perimeter of this unquestionably beautiful space whilst glancing through open windows, the opulence of these surroundings is unsettling; because experience suggests that if society has a slot for Reed, it is unlikely to be here, amongst all of this.

At his knees are draws and pulling on a handle he finds printer paper, rolls of transparent sticky tape and some white sticky labels; he takes a sheet of labels.

Back at his sofa, the nmap command has finished so he types:

cat nmap_1.txt

The contents of nmap_1.txt rapidly scroll away, leaving just a few lines visible, including:

nmap done: 256 IP addresses (29 hosts up) scanned in 392.79 seconds

Reed issues the command:

nano nmap_1.txt

causing a simple text editor to load and show the contents of nmap_1.txt, enabling him to navigate it and search for the number eighty, drawing his attention to this line:

80/tcp open http Apache httpd

which is listed under the IP address:

172.16.0.12

meaning that there could be something accessible via a web browser on that computer.

He types the dot separated sequence of numbers into Firefox, hits Enter and to his delight live video feeds blink into action; and it is his own surveillance software that is being used to monitor these premises.

Above the *80/tcp* line is this one:

22/tcp open ssh OpenSSH

Starting another Xterm he types:

ssh john@172.16.0.12

which returns:

Enter passphrase for key '/home/john/.ssh/id_rsa':

so he carefully types that long password composed of ones and zeros and after two seconds, welcome text appears; Reed now has control of the computer who's IP address ends with twelve; but which one is it?

His grin is now almost a permanent expression; he gulps more tea before typing:

eject

Somewhere on that rack of slim machines, a DVD motor whirs and its tray slides open.

Reed whispers, “Hello.”

He writes the number twelve on a white label, gets up and sticks it neatly onto the only pizza box sized computer with a protruding DVD tray, gently tapping the drawer to slip it back into place.

Sitting down again, Reed spends the next hour connecting to computers, ejecting their DVD trays and labelling them with an identification number.

14:30

On the island in the centre of the kitchen, there is evidence of sandwich making; bread crumbs and tomato sauce stain its cold surface and a tub of margarine, cheese and a loaf wrapped in plastic have clearly been combined.

The biting breeze and overcast sky has not deterred Reed from munching lunch at a picnic bench.

Sandwich in one hand and pen in the other, Reed stares at pages of his notepad; a sketched table of details exposed by nmap; and although he was able to connect and issue an eject command on all listed computers,

one of them is not on that rack.

Steepled office block behind him and a bunk house in front, two other buildings east and west are yet to be explored so topping up his tea, he begins walking towards the building on his left, over a noisy granite rock covered ground.

Rectangular windows are positioned high but lower down they are square; and a two piece wooden door constructed from massive vertical planks that are bound together by huge black rivets, is surrounded by a protruding stone archway.

A keypad.

Tapping his trusty code causes a dull thud and half of the big door to gently open towards him.

Inside is a huge hall with brown wooden girders and white walls; a staircase without banisters leads up to a balcony that reaches around the entire interior, enabling observation through those high rectangular windows.

Thick wooden pillars that support the balcony burrow into a floor of stone slabs, that probably remain from the

original build, polished by the footfall of a million ancient paces.

If there are other exits, they are not obvious from here.

No furniture but balanced on their own stands, are two bicycles; and wheeling one outside whilst still holding his cup of tea, he walks bike and tea back to the picnic table and puts his cup down.

Then off he goes across stony ground to survey this new domain.

Beyond the four big buildings is a plane, no shrubs or bushes to hide behind, just uneven patches of wild grass that extend in most directions until it meets trees and presumably a wall.

In one direction the ground drops down a hill, which would be a good place to hide if you wanted to spy on these buildings but then he sees the surveillance polls, their cameras just visible over the brow and he considers that perhaps the perimeter of this complex is completely visible from video feeds.

Sheds appear in clusters of three, here and there, like

bunkers.

Cycling behind the fourth yet unexplored building and this compound’s main gate is in sight, a giant, solid barricade.

He stops, feet down, holding handle bars.

There are two tall polls of cameras, one situated at the gate, capable of capturing things on both sides of the entrance and another poll further in.

Reed cycles closer to the gate looking for a keypad or a handle but instead there is a wooden cabinet, not unlike a beekeeper’s beehive.

After putting the bicycle on its stand, he lifts the cabinet’s lid which locks into place, shielding and shading what is underneath.

A laptop with a blank screen.

Rubbing his finger over the touch pad, four video feeds instantly appear, showing what is on the other side of the gate; a road that bends left and what looks like an empty parking area to the right.

The laptop's DVD tray has been ejected.

Instinctively he presses the Alt and Tab keys at the same time to show what other applications are running and he brings the one calling itself *Keypad* to the foreground; a small application with twelve buttons and a text field.

[_____]
- 7 8 9 -
- 4 5 6 -
- 1 2 3 -
- 0 -
Open Close

Using the laptop's touch pad, he navigates the mouse cursor, clicking numerical buttons, typing the same key code that he has been using since he arrived, each number briefly appearing in the text field before changing into an asterisk.

Then he clicks: *Open*

A loud alarm begins beeping, surprising him a little bit and after fifteen seconds the great gate has completely

rolled away.

Reed steps into the opening, and finds himself looking at a narrow path or single-track road that runs alongside a row of trees and in front of him, there is a gravelled area that appears to be either a car park or a turning space, for large vehicles to manoeuvre.

As the gate starts to close, rumbling along its tracks, Reed heads back to the cabinet, shuts the lid, and then mounts his bike, cycling off in the same direction he initially came from.

Leaning the bicycle against an external wall of the fourth unexplored building, there is no grand arch, but instead two short rectangular doorways that are separated by a good distance and apparently designed for people of about four feet tall.

One door has a keypad.

Tapping his code the door clicks open, predictably swinging towards him.

Stooping under the door frame, he steps into another open plan hall with familiar wooden girders, balcony,

stairs and a stone floor.

Shafts of light escape the balcony, shining and casting shadows of arched window frames onto walls below.

With hands behind his back, he examines these architectural spectacles but is quickly distracted by evenly spaced wall recesses; each big enough to hold a flower pot, electric lights are set flush inside shelving.

Now curious, he looks around for a light switch and finds a collection, chest height, a meter or so away from the bolted second door, and flicking each switch one by one, differently coloured shelf lights sparkle inside their little alcoves against white walls, reminding Reed of an iced birthday cake.

Just as he's about to ascend the balcony staircase, he notices a hidden third exit, a stone frame, with no door to mark its entrance, but, by flipping additional wall switches, a descending spiral staircase is revealed.

CHAPTER 22

The worn stone steps are smooth beneath Reed's feet as he makes his way down the narrow passageway, the

only sound being a faint echo, that is, until he finally reaches the bottom, where the silence is broken.

A white metal box, taller and wider than Reed, has the words *Battery Energy Storage* printed in large blue capital letters.

Multiple thick blue cables, the width of Reed's arm, trail over a clean concrete floor, up a wall and into a four foot high tunnel, lit inside like a subway, and opposite, similar sized red cables run from the battery box up into another lighted opening.

Reed surmises that the red cables might run from those clusters of sheds, which would mean, at least one of those little buildings is a power transformer.

A cold whistling wind blows through both tunnels, ventilating and probably helping to control the temperature down here.

There is a slope on the right, forming another short but wide passageway, leading up to a hatch and must have been the means by which this white power-box-thingy was installed.

Plastered walls, rough and pitted, are uniformly painted white which helps to appease Reed's twinges of claustrophobia, at least while the lights are on.

At one end of the large battery box are six unlit red translucent on-off switches, each paired with UK-compatible electrical power sockets.

An extension lead is plugged into one, trailing along the floor to a workbench positioned against the left wall that is topped with shelves and small drawers, from which, after a brief search, Reed discovers a black LED torch, which he tucks into his fleece pocket.

The absence of windows, real daylight and a cup of tea starts to feel suffocating so Reed turns towards the staircase with the intention of leaving but pauses thoughtfully, before replacing the LED torch.

Once we step into the realm of greed, regardless of justification, we soon find ourselves depriving others of their property; and how would it feel if someone did that to us; Reed knows he is better than that, and as a matter of fact this huge energy storage unit alone, is enough to prevent this compound from being plunged into darkness; but if that situation ever occurs, whoever

is down here will need that torch.

Top of the stairs, Reed turns off all lights and exits the building.

Cycling the few yards back to the picnic benches, he puts the bicycle on its stand, before carrying his lunch tray back through the hallway and into the kitchen, where kettle and sink are both filled with water, igniting one and squirting washing up liquid into the other.

Walking around the kitchen Reed puts food back into the fridge and drops used cutlery into soapy water, and after washing and drying, disinfectant spray is used to clean all surfaces.

Toilet break, before a pot of tea, a cup and some milk are carried up to the attic.

CHAPTER 23

2008 January 15, Tuesday.

14:45

From his notes, he points Firefox at one of the other

computers with an open port 80, and as anticipated, instead of more video feeds, just text is displayed in the form of a list of blue hyperlinks and bold, black headings.

With tea in hand, Reed browses the index.

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[END TOC]

Under the bold black heading *Barmouth Mynachdy*
Reed clicks: *Abstract*

[ABSTRACT]

Dear Reed,

Thank you for coming and welcome to Barmouth Mynachdy. English translation: Barmouth monastery

I am of the opinion that your visit was inevitable and it is good that you are here because your genetic family tree is deeply rooted in this country, Wales. Young man, you are as welsh as the rain, valleys and hills.

When I purchased this land twenty-or-so years ago, everything was broken, with weathered pieces of masonry scattered about or buried, but after eight years and using as much original material as possible, Barmouth Mynachdy was put back together again.

The pastures that surround this compound are part of the property. The monks who once lived here were farmers and probably helped feed the surrounding villages.

Permission to build on this historic location came with some expensive conditions. For example I had to pay for archaeologists from the Museum Of Welsh Heritage to excavate and map the ruins.

Bulldozers and builders identified an area as foundations, which turned out to be the top of a staircase. And after three months of careful digging with brushes and trowels, step by step, archaeologists eventually unearthed a walled up entrance to catacombs, miles of them, deep and endlessly descending, branching out beyond the borders of this compound, with more steps buried within the tunnels, perhaps hiding even more treasure, but alas still buried because its recovery would be too destructive to these already exposed and precious tunnels.

What treasure?

Catacomb wall art (the oldest of which dates back 10,000 years), is obviously important, but the archaeologists also found carved precious metals, objects they could hold in their hands, old objects, with ages ranging from 800 to 6,500 years.

There is yet something else: Quartz

Wales is famous for the stuff but there is an abundance of blue and amber in these tunnels that have an unusual and potentially powerful property. When a single vein of quartz is exposed to a light source, the whole tunnel

illuminates. We do not know what is happening but it is yet another secret we must keep to ourselves, otherwise can you imagine what would happen if corporations decided that they must be allowed to mine this strange resource.

Anyway, the museum folk went bonkers.

But it all belongs to me.

The museum were steely in their insistence that the treasure remain on Welsh soil and I couldn't have agreed more.

I sold about a quarter of the haul to Welsh Heritage for a very large sum and though I still own the bulk, it is stored by the museum somewhere and I have to pay for the security, insurance and maintenance.

More archaeologists came and for two and a half years, ten people lived here almost permanently, digging, cataloguing and theorising.

They diverged my monastery's reconstruction, for the better. Barmouth Mynachdy was resurrected, becoming a spiritual retreat for archaeological research.

Technology was installed connecting us directly to a network of museums across the globe, enabling the researchers here to share their findings with hundreds of other people.

One of my favourite discoveries was a gold belt buckle who's decorations and crafting techniques match those of relics found inside burial mounds at Stone Henge, 300 miles away, but more disruptive is the matter of my belt buckle's age, it's estimated to be 6,000 years old, predating Stone Henge's currently estimated date of birth by about 500 years.

So, we have very similar ancient bling, turning up in Barmouth and Stone Henge.

Multiple bunk beds, showers and toilets were specifically installed for the museum folk but as you can see, those people are no longer here, so use whatever you want. The same goes for all of the technology too.

The museum folk were like family, taking on much of my project management, helping with questions about ancient building techniques and materials that my modern building workforce were unaware of.

And thanks to the museum, Barmouth Mynachdy secrets, its catacombs and treasure were kept out of the papers, which by my reckoning, is a miracle.

There are two entrances to the catacombs from this compound that are hidden by shed-like buildings. Only one of them houses a Power Transformer but all have electricity-danger signs placed on them.

There are clickable maps available from the table of contents, of the catacombs, this compound and one that shows the extent of the whole property.

While you are at Barmouth Mynachdy you are safe and welcome to stay forever if you so wish.

Rubbish:
On Friday mornings rubbish is collected, provided that bin bags are left on the other side of the main gate.

Food:
Every Sunday and Thursday, supplies will be dropped off on the other side of the main gate in brown cardboard boxes. You should be able to clearly see when a delivery has been made using the cameras (I

trust you have found the cameras). Don't get your rubbish and supplies mixed up.

That's it. I am very glad that you are here Reed.

I recommend that you view the Crimson Rain text next.

[END ABSTRACT]

Chest pains and those mysterious tears.

After reading that, Reed picked up his tray of lukewarm tea and set a course for the kitchen, but for the past fifteen minutes he has been shut away inside the toilet whilst an extractor fan quietly vibrates.

CHAPTER 24

[CRIMSON RAIN]

Crimson Rain is a code name given collectively to groups of British Intelligence, tasked with the covert infiltration of mechanisms used for transferring terror related assets.

A few of those mechanisms are then bled, in order to

pay for other operations.

In simple terms, some criminals are allowed to succeed so that their wealth can be tapped and used against other baddies.

For 45 years Crimson Rain has successfully infiltrated the flow of hundreds of millions of pounds sterling, that streamed back and forth between criminal groups associated with the Irish Republican Army and includes those with allegiances to Libya, Syria, Iran, Russia and the United States of America.

But the funds Crimson Rain pilfers are also susceptible to being tapped and siphoned; inevitable when transactions take place in the shadows.

Criminal networks operating within both the UK's Special Branch and local police forces, hooked up, merging into a dominating hub of European criminal collectives, where police and intelligence resources are used to enable the flow of contraband including human trafficking.

In return, massive amounts of pounds and euros are tapped and shared amongst an ever growing number of

corrupt UK police and intelligence operatives.

Whatever the code name Crimson Rain once referred to, it is now synonymous with corruption, of the absolute highest order, by those who have access to and influence over, every method of UK civil surveillance and control.

The connection with you, Reed:

Your details were flagged on databases linked to Crimson Rain and forwarded to Special Branch.

They, Crimson Rain, are in the process of conjuring an excuse to put you in prison as a spy or an accomplice; treason basically.

They just need to collect enough data points to construct a dot-to-dot image of a traitorous character.

All criminal networks respond in similar ways when they believe someone is about to blow the whistle on them: with an assortment of intimidation and violence; but this lot have the power to incarcerate so that the violence can be dispensed in prison; neat and tidy with no loose ends.

The good news is, this compound will shield you to a large degree. Just stay put and remember your training.

Criminal networks persist because of corrupt law enforcement so I challenge you to use all of the resources available here at Barmouth Mynachdy, to disrupt Crimson Rain's activities.

Their weakness will be: people.

It is true for any group but particularly valid for criminal collectives; they will have idiots working for them, fools educated by action films and video games.

Crimson Rain are confident in their bullet proof ability to be untouchable. You will demonstrate that they are mistaken.

Start with: The Milton Keynes Connection.

Reed, you are gifted and born to do this; and the sooner you start the better.

[END CRIMSON RAIN]

CHAPTER 25

[MILTON KEYNES CONNECTION]

Milton Keynes is home to a collection of crime groups, each operating within specific neighbourhood blocks; and the Milton Keynes police Call Centre plays an important part, signalling gang members when Joe Public reports criminal activity; an essential service that helps keep villains free from ankle tags.

Special Branch and Military Intelligence offices exist here, plus a dense surveillance infrastructure and a well armed local police force with access to an array of ground and air equipment.

Also known as Spook City, it is an ideal training location for counter espionage, having the biggest Integrated Digital Monitoring System in Great Britain (2006).

A gateway to hell. Women and children are forced into slavery and prostitution by the hour and theft is a second by second affair; rapes by the minute, murders by the day and contraband is sold on every canal boat

and bus stop.

Locals are at each other's throats, viciously attacking neighbours and strangers over parking spaces, whilst at the same time extending their garden fences to steal plots of public land.

Yet, even with all of the resources available to Milton Keynes police, the frequency of this behaviour is ever increasing, because UK law enforcement is a narco-system, seduced by the penetration of wealth and power that contraband and human trafficking creates; and is therefore largely under the influence of crime collectives, who in turn are enabled by Crimson Rain.

Central Milton Keynes is notorious for a crime group known as MK18 or Milton Keynes 18th Street, an all Nigerian-descent membership with connections to diplomats and shipping businesses from west Africa. In 2006 it had an estimated turnover of 200 million pounds sterling; and it is a Crimson Rain jewel.

The Henge, is important reading.

[END MILTON KEYNES CONNECTION]

CHAPTER 26

[THE HENGE]

So called because of its large prominent concrete structures, the Henge is a Cypriot equivalent to the UK's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory but with the addition of analogue and digital, signal processing.

Cyprus is a supplier of aircraft stealth technologies to the European Union, leasing advanced helicopter technologies to Great Britain; and recently, Crimson Rain had control of one of those helicopters, using it to ensure the safe passage and delivery of 2 container lorries carrying contraband and some west Africans, all destined for MK18.

A service station was intended to be the point of transaction; but unfortunately for them, you were there with binoculars, making corrupt airborne law enforcement very nervous.

The Henge also carries out digital analysis for Special Branch when proper UK judicial authority is unlikely or

needs to be avoided. Cypriot analysts are world class at gaining access to any networked resource but they are not offensive, meaning it is unlikely that they will attack and disrupt infrastructures of other countries.

How do I know all this?

By accident.

Sometimes it can seem as if life is a patchwork of coincidences when actually contemporary interactions encourage us to gravitate towards those who are like minded. I hit it off with a few techy museum folk and one of them, Seyyal, the person who installed that academic network stuff here, revealed to me that 5 years previous she had worked at a dig near the grounds of a new Cyprus Intelligence Service complex, nicknamed the Henge, where her duties were to maintain a link to that same academic network.

She explained that the Cyprus Intelligence Service allowed her to install hardware inside the Henge, provided that they (CIS) were also given access, for obvious security reasons.

To be honest I was beginning to glaze over but then

Seyyal told me that she discovered what CIS were actually doing; tunnelling through the Global Archaeological Academic Network to access computer systems belonging to British Military Intelligence, sucking data regarding diplomats, foreign embassy people and British citizens.

My now dumbstruck expression must have implied doubt because she insisted on proving it to me; and so from her workstation in the first floor office, above the kitchen, we connected to the hardware that she has installed on these premises, out onto her academic network thingy and into hardware that she had installed at the Henge years ago.

Suddenly, we were inside a Cyprus Intelligence Service computer network, riding old Unix machines.

What a buzz!

Once inside the Henge we connected to ordinary, factory default, personal computer work stations where dedicated applications exist, apparently designed specifically to navigate various British computer networks.

Seyyal copied some of those applications for me, running them in an emulator from her computer; no login required!!

After a week or two of this extraordinary cyber experience, I was suddenly confronted with my own personal data; as if looking into a mirror for the first time and discovering how others really perceive me.

British Military Intelligence had documented my life and labelled me as a terrorist. But they have in fact mistaken me for someone else.

British Military Intelligence believe that I am your genetic mother's sister, your genetic aunty, but I am not.

You know that you were adopted because your genetic parents died and no other family relations could be located. This is all true. If you have any living genetic relatives, I am unaware of them. I did not know your mother but I did know your mother's sister and her name was Rachel Jales but she has also passed away.

You also know that your adoptive parents think the world of you.

They did know your mother but understandably distanced themselves from your aunty Rachel whom you have never met because she was sent to prison at Her Majesty's pleasure, that is to say, there was no set release date.

Sadly, when aunty Rachel was finally released she suffered severe illness and died soon after.

But now you can begin learning more about your genetic parents and why aunty Rachel was sent to prison but most important Reed, you will now find out why I encouraged you to learn cyber skills.

You taught yourself to program using Java, no small task. It was fantastic watching you evolve and morph into a competent computer programmer and logical problem solver. But all of those secretive communications and counter intelligence techniques you learned over the years were not just to protect yourself from nefarious Internet users. Remember that when I disappeared, you survived and made contact with me again using those skills.

And now you are here.

I know it has been tough for you and I know about some of the things that you have struggled with but from now on you are secure and a menace to those forces of Great Britain who are influenced by corruption because you are going to crack them open.

Your first task: solve the Crimson Rain problem by exposing them.

I would like to suggest a few ways of doing this:

Use crimestoppers-uk (dot) org and report those two containers currently dormant at that service station. Explain who they are destined for, giving a brief explanation of MK18 and Crimson Rain.

The registration plates attached to the trailers are:
K5Y7 22THG
P7V9 37HBF

Keep that text for copy and paste purposes.

Then:

Find some Milton Keynes newspaper web sites and write a robot to spam their 'Contact Us / Leave A

Message' web page, using that same text.

Have fun and use similar robots to spam lots of 'Contact Us / Leave A Message' pages; Council web pages, politician web pages, national news papers, international news papers, television networks, that sort of thing.

Keep a list because it will be useful to use often once you get into the swing of things.

Then poke the Henge in both eyes; log in and grab it all, as much as you can and robot-spam that shit to every fudging news outlet that exists in the free world.

Use email too. We have SMTP email servers here, via which you can spam anonymous messages to whom ever you want.

Harvest email addresses of reporters, television presenters, politicians; you get the idea. Send them all everything, Crimson Rain and Henge stuff.

[END THE HENGE]

Head in hands, Reed rubs his forehead; it is time for another toilet break.

CHAPTER 27

2008 January 15, Tuesday.

17:30

Outside, an exterior light overpowers stars and though frosty, Reed sits at a picnic bench with both hands wrapped around a hot cup of tea.

It is too bright, bleaching the colour from everything, so carrying his cuppa, Reed walks to the bunk house and switches on Utility Room lights, doing the same for the other two buildings, east and west, finally extinguishing that powerful exterior lamp.

Wet gravel glistens.

Just a few tens of hours ago Reed was homeless, seemingly about to be arrested by corrupt law enforcement, but he ran for the border and hid on a dark country road where he was deprived of his car, yet as always and somehow, he pushed through and just kept going.

Strong-willed he supposes; but that sad spirit of his, is in

continuous pain, and like smouldering embers inside his lungs, worse with every breath.

Reed finishes his tea, breathing shallow in an attempt to relieve the discomfort.

Walking the hallway he enters the kitchen, reboils the kettle and makes another pot, carrying it steadily up the stairs, through the office, up more stairs and into the attic.

The computer monitor has shifted, the box it is sat on is slowly being squashed.

Descending the attic stairs once more, he returns minutes later carrying a second flat computer monitor, carefully placing it on the table next to the other one.

There are reams of A4 printer paper in the cupboards behind him, so after collecting six packs he removes the plastic box and places three under each screen.

Then after shutting down the personal computer, Reed plugs the second monitor into the back of the PC and after turning everything on again, and to his delight, both screens operate as expected, giving him twice the real

estate to work with; but congratulations are not really deserved, since that was how this computer was originally configured before he dragged it up here; so ...

18:15

Reed sits, starts an Xterm and types:

netbeans

A splash screen heralds the coming of Reed's favourite Integrated Development Environment, from which he starts a new Java project, calling it: Pilgrim

NetBeans dutifully draws a progress bar and spins an hour glass, eventually generating project icons and folders, plus a file called Pilgrim.java, into which Reed inserts the following line:

import java.awt.Robot;

He also starts FireFox and drags it over to the second screen.

19:30

After some web searches, a selection of separate FireFox tabs contain news paper ‘Contact Us’ web pages, except one, which is showing the crimestoppers-uk (dot) org web site, where Reed clicks *Report Anonymously* and proceeds to describe two container lorries, their location and what they are carrying; but he makes no mention of Crimson Rain.

Reed sends the report and closes that tab.

More tea.

It is now time to build a software robot which will automatically navigate a web page and robotically enter incriminating information, before finally pressing the Send button, looping a few times, hopefully encouraging the recipient, in this case news papers, to pay attention.

Pressing F5, he refreshes a news paper’s ‘Contact Us’ web page and starts tapping his keyboard’s Tab key repeatedly, keeping count, until a flashing cursor appears in the first text field, in this case one labelled: *Your name*

That took twenty three Tab key presses.

Back to NetBeans on the other screen, he writes a loop in Pilgrim.java to simulate twenty three presses of a Tab key.

```
/*
* LOOP PILGRIM CONTINUOUSLY
*/
while ( true ) {

/*
* ALLOW TIME TO MANUALLY  KILL THIS PROGRAM
* WHEN NEEDED.
*/
getRobot ().delay ( 5000 );

/*
* TAB KEY PRESSES TO THE ‘Your name’ FIELD.
*/
for ( int i = 0; i < 23; i++  ) {
   getRobot ().keyPress ( KeyEvent.VK_TAB );
   getRobot ().keyRelease ( KeyEvent.VK_TAB );
   getRobot ().delay ( 100 );
}
```

A few instructions are also required to turn lines of incriminating information into robotic keyboard presses,

so that, for example, *Subject* is populated with:

REGARDING CORRUPT LAW ENFORCEMENT, ASSOCIATED WITH MK18

Into the *Message* text area, Pilgrim is instructed to insert the same information Reed sent to Crime Stoppers, with the addition of exposing Crimson Rain also.

Once Pilgrim version one is complete, he types:

java -jar Pilgrim.jar

Then moving his mouse cursor over to the other screen he clicks on Firefox's title bar where a news paper's 'Contact us' web page is waiting for some input.

Seconds pass, keyboard Tab presses are simulated and text areas are populated before the *Send* button is pushed, at which point the 'Contact us' web page is refreshed; a procedure that repeats, over and over, sending an identical message to the same news paper, again and again, causing a news room's inbox to fill with an identical email and a subject line that reads:

REGARDING CORRUPT LAW ENFORCEMENT,

DATA POINT

ASSOCIATED WITH MK18

Drinking some tea and wandering the attic while Pilgrim loops, he contemplates the idea that after ten iterations, Pilgrim could instruct Firefox to switch to another news paper's 'Contact Us' web page and do the same, though each different news paper will require its own unique set of robotic key strokes; so back at his seat he presses the Crtl and C key at the same time, terminating Pilgrim version one.

It takes more than an hour to make the changes but Pilgrim version two works fine, so he lets it run, robotically sending the same message to three different news papers; hardly enough but it is a start and the framework is there.

Time for another sandwich, heavy on the margarine and tomato sauce.

21:45

A small sense of achievement; fire and forget without blowback.

He now needs to harvest reporter email addresses; just

a few to get started; he will then write a program to disseminate whatever he can pilfer from the Henge.

Reboiling the kettle, he makes a fresh brew and carries the lot out to his picnic bench where a beautifully lit quadrangle glows through wet mist and cold clean air.

Reed knows when to count his blessings, but sitting within these twinkling fairy tale surroundings he still can not help but dread.

Post traumatic gnawing of the homeless experience can not be dismissed, ever, because it is a type of existence which carves trauma into your very soul; a perpetual fear of an absence of everything, a void so dark and sticky that reintegration is practically impossible.

Then an owl hoots, snapping Reed out of it, abruptly halting his spiral of gloom before a second distant feathered colleague replies with an identical song.

Bats squeak and blur across a colourfully lit forecourt like featureless darts, causing his mind to wander, drifting into luminous catacombs.

But it is time to continue.

In the attic Reed spends an hour searching for email addresses that belong to media outlets, television news rooms, reporters, politicians and border controls in the United Kingdom and beyond.

23:00

Using emacs, Reed copies and pastes each email address, one on top of the other into an empty file, creating a long column of email addresses, forty six in total.

Considering his options, he decides to get this new program ready to launch, a new NetBeans project called: Pilgrimail

Each email address will be sent an individual message.

Leaning forward, Reed opens his notepad and jots down some pseudocode:

[PSEUDOCODE]

Loop for each email address

create a text file containing:
to: theEmailAddress
from: tuxfoo@anActiveDomainName
subject: SUBJECT, TO BE DECIDED
THE MESSAGE, TO BE DECIDED
.

save text file as:
anEmail_address_tld.txt

use sendmail:
sendmail < anEmail_address_tld.txt

display some text after each email is sent.

end loop.

[END PSEUDOCODE]

Converting pseudocode into Java instructions takes nearly two hours, with a few toilet breaks and a fresh pot of tea; but it works, creating forty six individual text files in a directory that he has chosen to call: post_box

Execution of the sendmail command is currently commented out and only time will tell what the subject

and message will actually be; what remains is for him to gain access to the Henge, sneak around and copy incriminating text, that shows Cyprus has unauthorised access to British Military Intelligence computer networks, UK diplomatic data and British Citizens' personal data, and then aggregate all of it into a coherent email message.

CHAPTER 28

2008 January 16, Wednesday.

01:15

From the Table Of Contents web page he clicks: *Accessing the Henge*

But the document assumes he has already connected to the Global Archaeological Academic Network, so he backs up and clicks on: *How to connect*

This document explains that a piece of hardware has been fitted to one of those attic, server rack computers, connecting directly to its motherboard and should already be 'mounted'; but there are also troubleshooting suggestions if, for some reason, it can not be accessed.

This hardware will give access to the Global Archaeological Academic Network but the document also states, applications should be run from his desktop and to make this possible he will need to use the ‘-X’ option when logging in.

He types:

ssh -X john@172.16.0.10

and after entering the password he test his connection by typing:

xeyes &

A tiny application appears, displaying a pair of eyes that follow his mouse cursor; so far so good.

His next step is to launch a program that he has not heard of before:

gaan --portal

A new window materialises, a small independent desktop, with separate floating windows arranged inside

of it; and after a few seconds they all begin to animate, with colourful ticking text and live video feeds.

He resizes the application and arranges the floating windows for a better view, watching, as typed conversations tick away with different coloured lines of text, presumably to help identify chatting participants.

Video windows display live feeds from archaeological digs, where people stand, crouch and drink from mugs, apparently working in day lit time zones.

Grinning with curiosity at this new toy, he instinctively looks around the application for an audio option so he can hear the videos, but more reading reveals that a speaker has to be plugged into an audio socket on the server rack; not important right now.

The document also says, he must click the application's *Window* menu and select: *Root ansi-term*

and type the following:

mount /dev/gaan3 /media/henge/

which will connect him to another piece of Global

DATA POINT

Archaeological Academic Network hardware, one that is installed inside a Cyprus Intelligence Service building, also known as: The Henge.

Reed is then advised to ignore all previous applications and minimise them, stating that he can now browse the contents of ‘/media/henge’ as normal and launch:

wine /media/henge/program_files/box.exe

It takes a moment but eventually a new application starts, looking very business like and boring, with an extraordinary number of tabs, text boxes and pull down lists that demonstrate a distinct lack of feng-shui.

The documentation then instructs him to simultaneously press Ctrl plus F7 and type his own name into the newly appeared Search Box, which he does, but his fingers hover over the keyboard before pressing the Enter key to proceed.

The hourglass icon spins for fifteen seconds whilst the Box application updates, changing its colour to orange, filling previously empty text fields and drop-down menus with relevant information.

Albeit an interesting repository, this spook masturbatory aid, is just a curiosity, so he moves on.

wine /media/henge/program_files/britintel.exe

Another unremarkable database application appears, and when he clicks on a drop-down, it displays a lengthy list of options, all of which start with the prefix "mi_" followed by various sequences of characters, and scrolling through, he discovers that it is quite extensive.

As instructed he selects the top one: *mi_terrorist_77*

then types: *show databases*;

The empty area in the middle of the application instantly turns into a list of databases that can be searched:

+--------------------+
| *Database*
+--------------------+
| *noFlyList*
| *iraq*
| *libya*
| *nIreland*
| *iran*

| *britain*
| russianFederation
| *commonWealth*
| *hongKong*
| *china*
| *afghanistan*
| *pakistan*
| *israel*
| *spain*
| *argentina*
| *latinAmerican*
| *USA*
+----------------------+

Using the ‘britain’ database, he issues a few more commands, searching for domiciles, and although his adoptive parents’ residences are not found, aunty Nicky’s old address is, and amongst the returned associated matter is this line:

Classified. Box ID: 502

Switching back to the Box application, he presses Ctrl plus F7 and types: *box_id 502*

CHAPTER 29

2008 January 16, Wednesday.

03:15

Reed walks slowly through the forecourt where fine rain clings to his face, soaking his eyes, short circuiting his ability to keep them open.

Standing at the utility room entrance he looks behind, checking that the chapel's back door is shut; then heads for the bathroom to brush his teeth, returning to his bunk, and still dressed he lays down, falling asleep in less than ten minutes.

In the kitchen, a cup, tea spoon, plate and a knife have been cleaned and left to dry on the draining board; surfaces have been wiped and food is back in the fridge but cold tea and two used teabags still stew in the belly of a teapot.

Staircase wall lamps glow white and office hanging lamp fixtures spill light out onto a landing through an arch.

It is not warm in here.

DATA POINT

Through open window blinds, building illuminations outside are barely visible.

The attic door is open and at the top of the stairs, Reed's makeshift encampment is quite prominent, lacking the subtlety of arrangement that applies to the rest of the furniture.

On commandeered flat screens various applications occupy a computer desktop, including a web browser which is displaying live video feeds of Reed's workshop in Berkshire, showing a partially opened shutter door which should be closed and padlocked, but is not.

A trap, set and primed by those who's wicked burden it is to put people in prison, ready to snap and black-hood whoever gets too close to the computers inside.

Reed has made a mistake.

Abruptly he awakes, eyes open, his brain grasping at rational thoughts, trying to separate dream from reality.

Big red numbers of a digital wall clock say it is 5:45 am.

He slides off of the bunk and slowly walks to the showers where he strips, rinses, brushes his teeth again, gets dressed and heads back to the chapel, unfortunately still wearing rubber boots.

Upstairs, his screens are as he left them, with various applications running, but no live video feeds of his storage unit in Berkshire or anywhere else.

Emacs.

He has composed hundreds of lines of text, an aggregate of scraped Henge data, embarrassing, scandalous and dangerous.

[DOCUMENT ABSTRACT SECTION]

Foreign intelligences have access to British Military Intelligence archives.

In addition, access to databases owned by British retailers that hold customers', customers' friends and families' data, including images and videos, is being bought through shell companies that are in fact a front to foreign intelligence agencies.

Corrupt British law enforcement are using Cyprus Intelligence Service, (Cyprus' equivalent to British Military Intelligence) to covertly gain access to all of these databases, ignoring proper British judicial processes.

British Military Intelligence are working with and enabling criminal organisations in order to fund covert military operations, a decades old practice that has contaminated and corrupted high levels of British Military Intelligence and British civilian law enforcement.

This document describes how International criminal organisations and international foreign intelligences are able to access British Military Intelligence at will, including private and personal data held on British and foreign citizens, because of corruption at high levels of authority in Great Britain.

[END DOCUMENT ABSTRACT SECTION]

Reed made an effort to assemble the remaining body of the message as coherently as possible, using headings and short paragraphs.

The whole document is copied into Pilgrimail, which he

compiles and runs:

java -jar PilgrimEmail.jar

Then opening an two more Xterms, he types a similar command in each:

tail -f /var/log/mail.log

and:

tail -f /var/log/mail.err

where bounced emails or transmission problems will probably be announced.

Toilet break.

CHAPTER 30

2008 January 16, Wednesday.

07:30

Outside, the misty and wet weather persists, accompanied by a vibrant glow of electric lights

emanating from the surrounding buildings that enclose this forecourt.

In the bunkhouse, past the bunk beds, a corridor stretches back, giving access to toilets and showers, where a plastic disinfectant spray bottle stands next to a red mop bucket.

Inside the communal shower area, Reed pulls a mop progressing backwards, cleansing all corners of the floor, the mop head splashing when he finally drops it back into the bucket.

Six toilet cubicles.

Picking up the disinfectant spray, Reed steps into each lavatory using a red microfibre cloth from his jean's backside pocket and begins cleaning door handles, doors, side walls, the flushing mechanisms, toilet seats and basins, under, behind and all around their exteriors, eventually dropping the rag into the bucket.

Using the abrasive side of a washing up sponge and disinfectant spray he scrubs hand basins, drying and polishing them with a blue cloth, including chrome fittings, taps and handles, all shined; and with a

combination of wet and dry paper hand towels, mirrors get a slow wipe, before giving the lavatory floor some mop love.

Sliding the bucket backwards he begins work on this short corridor, washing the floor and dusting around door frames.

Squeezing the mop out, his next target is the bunk area, pushing the mop underneath each bed, one by one and mopping around the room's edges.

A wall of book shelves stand seven foot tall at least and at the bottom of one is a mysterious Agatha Christie arc that is scratched into the stone floor, apparently caused by something rolling over the same piece of flooring, time and again.

Reed pushes shelving immediately above the engraved tracks and it gently slides away, hinged, but slowly rolls back into place.

With a bit more force this time, the door opens, unveiling another room that is in fact simply an area partitioned off by tall bookshelves; and stepping inside, there are computer game cabinets, bean bags, sofas, tables and

chairs, sinks, coffee, tea, kettles, cupboards and very technical looking radio equipment stacked on top of desks.

Strange square sculptures hang on white walls like framed pictures, whilst tall wooden sets of shelves form a boundary, each with an arrangement of diversely sized shelving spaces, from small boxes, just big enough to hold a mug of tea to shelves as large as a computer screen; but almost all are empty and there is not a book in sight.

Still holding the mop he begins pushing it over polished stone slabs, walking up to the sinks, looking over the surfaces for evidence of usage and is impressed by their untainted clean appearance.

Crossing over to the desks with the radio equipment, all are turned off and it is not obvious how any of it can be switched on; just as well because powering these things up might accidentally broadcast his location.

Stepping closer to hanging wall sculptures, he immediately appreciates what he sees; for they are actually computer motherboards set inside wooden frames and they look absolutely brilliant.

The arcade cabinets have been hand crafted and instead of joy sticks and coin slots, there are keyboards and mice.

Dragging one of the cabinets sideways exposes a personal computer plus a small speaker stacked inside, both easily accessible so he presses power buttons and gently slides the cabinet back into place.

The screen flickers for a minute or two, displays an hour glass and then the red splash screen of a game called: FreeDoom

Tapping the Esc key, he starts a new game, shooting, collecting and dungeon crawling.

Doing the same to the other cabinet, Xgalaga's colourful little creatures bomb the heck out of Reed, holding the line, preventing him from progressing beyond level two.

However, a lack of calorie intake and a wave of giddiness forces him to sit on an unbelievably comfortable red leather sofa.

On a shelf near the entrance a round analogue clock

says it is nearly nine o’clock in the morning.

Reed closes his eyes, as outside, a pink sky greets a rising sun and clumps of grey clouds gather on the horizon, but right now above Barmouth Mynachdy there is a clear view of the heavens.

All people with a few exceptions, are capable of the same wickedness, of molestation and worse.

That bully, that adult or child, who executes their terror for pleasure and encourages others to unleash their own barbarous instincts, has surrendered to primitive desires.

When wickedness becomes contagious, an evil is born and it can not be extinguished easily, as those who try, will likely themselves become the thing that they wish to quell.

But to those tyrants, governments, police, intelligence agencies, adults and children, who believe they are beyond reach, we say, “Change is coming.”

DATA POINT

Life as we know it are pattern matchers, who must change strategy when patterns evolve, because at some point in time they all do; and time is simply a measurement of change, just as a centimetre is a measurement of distance and neither metric exists in nature, they are just cognitive tools used by humans.

Constants, so essential to mathematical formulas, firmly exist in our minds only, whereas one of the closest things that the natural world has to an 'absolute' is slow change, as perceived by us life forms who struggle to live just one hundred years.

Cognitive mathematical predictions will always fail because ironically, slow and-yet unpredictable change is one of the few natural and perceptible (and predictable) constants.

-- A Circular Delusion by Rachel Jales